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Drawn by W. Gouci from a sketch by Capt.n Trant.

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SOUTH EASTERN CORNER OF THE STOCKADE AT MELLOON

Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street. May 1827.

TWO YEARS

IN

AVA.

FROM MAY 1824, TO MAY 1826.

BY AN OFFICER ON THE STAFF OF THE QUARTER-MASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

Capt. Thomas Abercrombie Fraser
H.M. 95th

IL EST VRAI QUE LE TEMS PASSE PARTOUT ET PASSE VITE.
MDE. DE SEVIGNE.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXVII.

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LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES,
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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

TO

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL,

G.C.B., K.C.T.S. &c. &c. &c.

THIS NARRATIVE

OF

THE OPERATIONS OF THE BRITISH ARMY

UNDER HIS COMMAND,

DURING THE BURMESE WAR,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

513068

PREFACE.

THE following pages were originally written solely for the perusal of a few of the author's friends, by whose advice he has been induced to lay them before the public; and, as they aim at no pretensions beyond those of giving a plain and faithful account of the late war in the Burman Empire, and of such manners and customs of the inhabitants as he had an opportunity of remarking during his unsettled stay in Ava and Pegue, the author trusts that this his first appearance at the bar of criticism may be viewed with indulgence; and that any incorrectness of style will be forgiven by the reader when he recollects that he is only perusing the journal of a young soldier's first campaigns.

Having been present with the head-quarters of Sir A. Campbell's army, from the commencement

until the close of hostilities, the author is enabled, as an eye-witness, to relate the various incidents which occurred during the different actions and negotiations; and perhaps he has entered into details which are superfluous; but as every incident that took place, however trifling, tended in some measure to throw light on the peculiar system and plans of the Burmese, he has not made any alteration in the original arrangement of this work.

Although, in attempting to describe the Burman manners, the author is aware that he is touching on a subject already most ably and correctly descanted upon by Lieutenant-colonel Symes; yet, a slight glance at the character of the Burmese being necessary to elucidate other parts of the narrative, he has added such information respecting them as the unrestrained intercourse which took place between the British and Burmese, after the capture of Prome, afforded him an opportunity of obtaining: but much still remains to be said; and it would require considerably more time and attention than he had at his disposal, to give a full and detailed account of this interesting race.

To other and abler pens that task must devolve; but, in the meantime, the contents of these pages may prove acceptable; and it is with this hope that the author now ventures to publish his unpretending journal of Two Years' residence in Ava.

LONDON, *8th March*, 1827.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Situation of the Burman Empire—Symes's Embassy—Summary of the Causes of Hostilities—War declared—Expedition to Rangoon determined on—Sir A. Campbell appointed to command—Sail from Calcutta, and Rendezvous at the Andaman Islands 1

CHAPTER II.

Leave the Andaman Islands—Detachment sent to Cheduba—Enter the Rangoon River—Land at Rangoon—European Residents released from confinement—Description of Rangoon—Deserted by the Inhabitants—Shoe-Dagon Pagoda—Skirmish at Kemundine—Fire-rafts—Rains set in—Pickets constantly attacked—Action at Joazong on the 28th May 21

CHAPTER III.

First Attack on Kemundine, 3rd June—Flag of Truce—War-boats—Scarcity of Provisions—Attack and Capture of Kemundine, 10th and 11th June—Cheduba taken—Attack on our Lines, 1st July—Conscription—Burman Army—Artillery—Robberies committed—Dalla attacked—Burned by us—Action at Kumaroot and Pagoda Point, 8th July—Shumbah Woonghee killed—Gibson arrives 49

CHAPTER IV.

PAGE

Syriam attacked and captured—The Maha Bundoolah—His Origin—Army under the Kee Woonghee—State of the Court of Ava—Accession of Madu Chen—Conspiracy of the Princes of Prome and Tongho—Their Death—Sir A. Campbell appointed Commissioner—Stockades in the Dalla Creek—Expedition to Tavoy and Mergui—Cruelty of the Burmahs—The "Invulnerables" attack the Pagoda—Attempt to capture the Kitty—Price of fresh Provisions 72

CHAPTER V.

Column under Colonel Smith, sent to Kykloo—Skirmish at Tadaghee—Attack on Kykloo—The troops are repulsed, and retreat—Brigadier M'Creagh sent to attack the Stockade—Shocking instance of Burman Cruelty—Bivouac—Kykloo evacuated—Advance to Coghee—Tantabain taken—Colonel Godwin captures Martaban—Fall of Tavoy and Mergui—Expedition to Pegue, 27th November—Obo—Arrive at Pegue—The Shoemadoo—Fortifications of Pegue—Adjacent Country—Leave Pegue . . 93

CHAPTER VI.

Advance of the Burman Army on Rangoon—Surround the British Position—Charge of the Thirteenth Light Infantry—Sortie from the Dagon—Enemy's Trenches—Attack on Kemundine—Defeat of the Burman Left Wing and Centre—Enemy retires, and is defeated at Dalla—Rangoon set on fire—Kokien Stockades stormed—The Bundoolah retires to Denobiu—We prepare to advance—Peguers join us—Letters from Bundoolah—Siamese—Syriam—Tantabain 119

CHAPTER VII.

We march from Rangoon—Meet the Carians—Mopie—Enter Lyne, and march to the Banks of the Irrawaddy—Kioums at Sa-

PAGE

rawah—Uadeet—General Cotton repulsed from Denobiu—We retire on Sarawah—Cross the Irrawaddy, and assemble at Henzadah—Detachment sent to Tombay—Kioumziek—Reeds on Fire—Encamp at Koungshah—Arrive at Denobiu 144

CHAPTER VIII.

Encamp before Denobiu—War-boats—Sortie from the Fort—Communicate with General Cotton—He joins us 28th—Elephants charged by the Body-guard—Death of the Bundoolah, and evacuation of Denobiu, 2d of April—We leave Denobiu and advance, 4th of April—Letter from the Attweynwoon—Pass the Rapids—The Army enters Prome 25th of April—Situation of the town—The Inhabitants join us—Retreat of Prince Sarawaddy, and dispersion of his Force—War-boats captured 170

CHAPTER IX.

Musghi of Prome joins us—Colonel Godwin sent to Tongho—Army cantoned—The Burman Court tries to raise another Army—General Morrison takes Arracan 1st of April—Terreeketteree, or Issay Mew—Shoé Shando Pagoda—Festival Days—Burman Women—Their Occupations—Description of Dress and Appearance—Dress of the Men—Wrestling—Boxing—Game at Ball—Musical Instruments—The Patola—Songs—Plays and Dancing—Gambling—Marriage Ceremony—Ideas of Medicine and Surgery—Burial of the Dead, and Embalming 197

CHAPTER X.

Burmahs have no caste—Their Food—Spirits prohibited—Climate of Ava—Unhealthy Season—Rise and Overflow of the Irrawaddy—Soil and Vegetation of Pegue and Ava—Population—Deserted Villages—Origin of the Burmahs—Lootoo, or Council of State—Woonghees—Attweynwoons—Maywoons—Musghis—Feudal System—Revenues—Commerce—Productions of Ava 227

CHAPTER XI.

PAGE

Religion of Ava—Boodh, or Gaudma—Traces of the Pallis—Priesthood—Their Customs—Educate the Burman Youth—Vows of Celibacy—Holy Women—Kioums, or Monasteries—Curious Caves at Prome and Pagahm—Library at Prome—Pali Language—Maps—Astrology—Evil Omens—Witchcraft—Distinctions of Burman Nobility—The Tsaloeh—Golden Chattahs—Jurisprudence—Instance of Venality—Punishments—Mode of Execution—White Elephant—Currency 253

CHAPTER XII.

Provisioning of the Army—Burman Force assembled under Prince Memiaboo—Shaans—General Cotton reconnoitres Meeayday—Flag of Truce—Colonel Tidy deputed to Meeayday—Armistice signed—Sir A. Campbell proceeds to Neoungbenzeik—Kee Woonghee arrives—Conference on the 2nd—Conversation in the Lootoo—Attweynwoon visits our Camp—Commissioners meet on the 3rd—Discuss the Terms of Peace—and prolong the Armistice—Dinner in the Lootoo—We return to Prome 283

CHAPTER XIII.

Depredations of Marauders—Proceedings on Eastern Frontier—Letter from the Burman Commissioners—Armistice expires—Disposition of our Army—Shaans occupy Wattegaun—Colonel M'Dowall proceeds to attack them—is killed—the Sepoys retreat—Advance of the Burman Army—Colonel Godwin detached—Mr. Robertson arrives—The Burmahs attack Padaong Mew, and are repulsed—The Army leaves Cantonments—Action at Sembike—Shaans defeated, and Maha Nemiou killed—Action on the Heights of Napadee—Burman Centre and Right Wing dispersed 306

CHAPTER XIV.

PAGE

Civil Arrangements—The Army commences its March—Meeayday reconnoitred—We encamp there—Raj Gooroo liberated—Lameinzerai brings a Message from Melloon—We arrive at Patnagoh—Appearance of Melloon—Conferences on the Irrawaddy—Preliminaries of Peace signed—Races at Patnagoh—Letter from Dr. Sandford—The Burmahs demand a longer Truce—Hostilities recommence—Storm of Melloon, on the 19th of January—Treaty and other Papers found—Melloon destroyed . 330

CHAPTER XV.

We march from Patnagoh—Petrified Wood—Skirmish at Yaynangheoum on the 30th of January—Arrival of Dr. Price and the British Prisoners—Oil Wells—Pakangyeh—State of the Burman Court—The "King of Hell" appointed Commander-in-chief—Communication with the Emperor of China—Action in front of Pagahm Mew—9th February—The Town carried by Storm—The Shoezeegoon Pagoda—Curious Paintings—Dr. Price returns—Conduct of the Naiwoon Barein—His Execution—Camp formed near Ava 362

CHAPTER XVI.

The Army advances from Pagahm—Dr. Price arrives with Treasure—Repulse of the third Madras Light Infantry, at Sitang—Capture of that Stockade by Colonel Pepper—Encamp at Yandaboo—A Deputation and Treasure arrive from Ava—Conference with the Burman Commissioners—Treaty of Yandaboo, signed 24th of February—The Woonghee returns to Ava—English Officers sent to the Capital—Their Reception—Audience of the King—The British Army embarks for Rangoon 8th of March, 1826—Remarks 389

CHAPTER XVII.

PAGE

Column ordered to Aeng—We cross the River—Sembeghewn —Chalain Mew—Shoćchatoh Pagoda—Napeh Mew—Kieaan Tribes—Their Dress—History of the Kieaans—Singular mode of Tattooing—The Passine—Religion of the Kieaans—Funerals —Marriages—Laws—Weapons—We leave Doh—Method of drying Trout—Ascent of the Mountains—Nairiegain—Robberies of the Kieaans—Aeng Road—Sarowah—Enter Aeng on the 26th of March—Conclusion 416

TWO YEARS IN AVA.

CHAPTER I.

Situation of the Burman Empire—Symes's Embassy—Summary of the Causes of Hostilities—War declared—Expedition to Rangoon determined on—Sir A. Campbell appointed to command—Sail from Calcutta, and Rendezvous at the Andaman Islands.

The Burman Empire, in 1823, was situated between the 9th and 27th degrees of north latitude, and 91st and 99th degrees of east longitude; and comprised the countries of Ava, Pegue, Munnipoor, Arracan, and Tenasserim, which, though formerly independent kingdoms, had by degrees been united to the Burman empire. It was bounded on the north by Thibet, on the east by China and Siam; on its extreme south it touched Malaya, and the bay of Bengal and British India formed its western line of demarcation.

This immense tract of country is intersected by numerous superb rivers, rivalling those most famed in the East, in width, depth of water, and adaptation to the purposes of navigation and commerce; and contributing most largely to the prosperity of the

empire, by facilitating a rapid and easy intercourse with the most distant parts of its territory.

Of these rivers, the Irrawaddy, Thalueyn, and Sitang, are the principal. The first, rivalling the Ganges in magnitude, rises, it is supposed, in the mountains of Thibet, and, after flowing majestically through the whole length of the Burman empire, discharges itself into the bay of Bengal, receiving in its course the Keenduem and other tributary streams, and presenting a sheet of water seldom less than a mile, and often three or four, in width.

Like the Ganges, the Irrawaddy, at about two hundred miles from the sea, throws off two shallow streams, the Lyne and Bassein rivers, which running off severally south-east and south-west, form the outline of a delta, intersected by innumerable creeks and branches, too insignificant and intricate to be perfectly known.

The only one worth mentioning is the Panlang river, which leaving the Irrawaddy at Yangainchanyah, runs east-south-east for sixty miles, when, uniting with the Lyne branch, it assumes the name of the Rangoon river, and empties itself into the bay twenty miles south of Rangoon, having previously united with the Pegue river.

The main stream of the Irrawaddy continues a southerly course, until lost in the ocean: it has not been explored by Europeans below Yangainchanyah; but native accounts represent it as losing nothing of its grandeur.

Of the Thalueyn river but little is known that can be relied on; it likewise rises in Thibet, runs through the Chinese province of Yunan, then forms the boundary between Ava and Siam, and finally runs into the sea at Martaban. The origin of the Sitang river is, in like manner, involved in obscurity; it passes the town of Tongho, and is supposed to derive its source from the Shaan districts: at its mouth it has the appearance of being a very grand stream.

The kingdom, or, as it is now called, the province of Pegue, is a perfect flat, and extends from the Yomadoung mountains, which bound Arracan, to the Thalueyn river on the east. Prome and Tongho are its frontier towns to the northward, and alternately belonged to the Burmans and Peguers. It was said to be the granary of Ava: its fertile plains, watered by the annual overflow of the Irrawaddy, producing rice in the greatest abundance, which, by the medium of the river, is transmitted to the sterile parts of the empire. Arracan is divided from Pegue and Ava by the Anoumectoupiou or Yomadoung mountains, which extend from Cape Negrais to Chittagong, and then blend with the hilly districts of Cachar. Assam, to the north of Ava, once figured in the pages of oriental history, as a kingdom of some importance; but now it is reduced to the lowest pitch of insignificance. The remainder of the empire, with the exception of the Shaan districts, may be classed under the head of Ava Proper: it joins Pegue, at

Prome, and differs but little from that country, except in the hilly nature of the ground. There are also several small, insignificant tribes, who owe allegiance to the King of Ava, and pay him homage for their territories, which are mostly situated to the north-east of Ava.

It was only in the middle of the last century that Ava attained its pre-eminence over the nations of India ultra Gangem, and rose, from being a province of Pegue, to a vast empire, swallowing up all the minor states in its vortex, and only checked at last by coming in contact with British territory on one side, and Chinese on the other.

Alomprah, the founder of the present empire, established his authority over the Peguers in 1757; and having then prevented any recurrence of internal disturbance, by destroying all the Pegue nobility, thought of extending his empire by invading the Siamese, with whom the Burmahs were constantly at variance. His premature death prevented the success of his measures; but his successors, at different periods, having carried their arms in that direction, at last succeeded in wresting Mergui, Tavoy, and Tenasserim from the Siamese, and constituting them an integral part of the state. In 1783, Arracan, after a short resistance, yielded its liberties to the Burman armies, and became a province of the empire; and in 1821, Assam, Munnipoor, and all the minor states in that direction, fell an easy prey to the invaders, who thus were placed in contact

with our territory from Goalpara on the Burrampooter, to the Teknaaf, a small inlet of the sea dividing Chittagong from Arracan.

A nation which, urged by ambition, had succeeded in conquering every country opposed to it, was not likely to enter within the bounds of moderation merely through terror of the British name; particularly as, on every occasion in which we had a dispute with the Burmans, we had shown so much forbearance, that a haughty and ignorant people might have deemed it the result of fear; and ere long we were doomed to find, that whatever view they might take of the case, it was evident that a rupture must ensue. They made constant marauding inroads on our territories, our elephant-hunters were repeatedly attacked and carried off, and numerous petty insults seemed the prelude of declared hostilities.

The rapid rise of the Burman power, coeval as it was with our own in Asia, must, for many years past, have attracted the attention of our rulers in India, as it required but little penetration to foresee, that when once we came in collision with a powerful nation, never yet defeated by us, but, on the contrary, supposing itself superior to the whole world, a trial, at least, would be made on its part to assert its superiority, and a war would, of course, be inevitable.

Knowing this to be the case, it seems quite incomprehensible that so little knowledge should have been acquired of the real power and resources of our

neighbours; and even after the conquest of Assam, when the cloud that was gathering in the political horizon might have pointed out the necessity of precaution to those whom a long acquaintance with Asiatic courts should have made distrustful of the transient calm,—even then, no steps were taken to ascertain the views and nature of the Burman government; so that, when the storm unexpectedly burst, all was confusion, and Government was obliged to act upon information received twelve years before.

Thus was the army sent to Rangoon, on the supposition, that if an advance should prove expedient, it might be embarked in Burman boats manned by Burmans, and sailing up the Irrawaddy, reach the capital of Ava in three or four months. How little could the character of the Burman nation be known to those from whom this advice emanated, and what an erroneous opinion must they not have formed of despotic governments, did they conceive that one so arbitrary as the Burman could be divested of the means of withholding from us the resources of the country, even had the inhabitants felt inclined to favour our cause,—an occurrence not likely to take place, as their alarm would naturally induce them to fly from the invasion of a horde of strangers, and to repose confidence in the strength of that government under which they had been born.

The event proved the justice of these remarks. But, before I proceed further on this subject, it may

be well to throw a cursory glance over the different missions, or embassies, sent by us to this comparatively unexplored country, and which will be found during the last thirty years to have been only four in number. The first of these originated in the following circumstance:—

In the year 1794, three Burmahs, or Mugs, who had made themselves obnoxious to the Burman government, fled from Arracan, and took refuge in our territory at Chittagong, whither they were immediately pursued by the Burman chieftains, with an army of four or five thousand men.

The Burman General, on entering our territory, issued the strictest orders to his troops not to molest the inhabitants, and stated to the British authorities that his sole object was to recover the fugitives; but being informed by General Erskine, who commanded the force opposed to him, that, previous to negotiations he must withdraw into Arracan, he instantly acceded, and even came into the British camp to arrange matters amicably with the General.

The British territory, having once been violated by a nation of whom so little was known, it of course became desirable to ascertain more fully the views and nature of the Burman court; and as at this time a considerable mercantile intercourse was carried on between Rangoon and our sea-ports, it became necessary to exact for the British flag that respect and exemption from insult to which it was entitled, but had not hitherto obtained. In order to further these

views, Sir John Shore (now Lord Teignmouth) selected Captain Symes, seventy-sixth regiment, accompanied by Dr. Buchanan, and Ensign Wood, to proceed to Ava, and having provided them with suitable presents of considerable value, and given them the outline of a commercial treaty, the principal article of which was, to allow the residence of a British officer at Rangoon to superintend our mercantile interests, sent them in 1795 to Rangoon, whence they proceeded to Ava.

The object of this mission was fully accomplished, and Colonel Symes on his return brought an excellent account of the kingdom, which has since been published, and proves extremely accurate. Ensign Wood executed an admirable survey of the river Irrawaddy, which subsequently was the only guide for our military operations ; and Dr. Buchanan made some valuable inquiries on natural history, geography and botany.

Next year, Captain Hiram Cox proceeded to Rangoon, in the capacity of Resident, and although received at the court, he found so many difficulties thrown in his way, that it was obvious no intention existed of fulfilling the agreement of the preceding year, and he therefore returned, disgusted and discontented. His journal was published lately by his son, and appears to have been written under the influence of those feelings: it throws no light whatever on the resources or manners of the country, and is a mere repetition of personal proceedings.

A lapse of ten years occurred before we again communicated with our haughty neighbours, when Captain Canning was sent to Ava; but of his proceedings no written account is before the public. He was well received, and retained rather a favourable impression of the nation; in a subsequent mission however, in 1810, he was detained at Rangoon, and not allowed to proceed to the capital.

Any other information received with respect to Ava, rested on the authority of captains of ships and traders at Rangoon, whose views were of course limited to the transaction of their own affairs, and could not, therefore, be much relied on.

Since the failure of Captain Canning's last mission, but little intercourse took place between the two governments. The Burmans respected our territory, and although occasional disputes occurred between the inhabitants of the frontiers, they were of no importance. But, at the commencement of the Mahratta war, when all India was involved in hostilities, a circumstance occurred, which fully pointed out the ambitious and domineering spirit of the Burman councils.

The Maywoon of Arracan forwarded a letter to the Marquess of Hastings, in which the Burmans asserted their right to the province of Bengal, and called upon him to deliver them up; the line of policy pursued by the Marquess was worthy the talents of so distinguished a statesman. Instead of resenting it as an insult, and thereby drawing ano-

ther formidable enemy on his hands, he enclosed it to the court of Ava, expressing his astonishment that such an unauthorised act should be committed by the Rajah of Ramree, and requesting that the author should be punished as guilty, not only of an insult to the British government, but to the Burman king.

This *ruse* had the desired effect: the total suppression of the Mahratta power, pointed out to the Burmahs that had they wished to attack us, the opportunity was lost, and for some years nothing further was heard from them. This calm, however, was not likely to last: it was impossible that we could long remain in contact with them, and not break into hostilities, as their pride and ambition but sullenly brooked our being a bar to their design of western conquest, and in 1823 the appearance of a rupture was daily increasing.

At the mouth of the Teknaaf, a small inlet of the sea dividing Chittagong from Arracan, is situated a small island or sand-bank, called Shapuree, on which we had stationed a few Sepoys. This insignificant, sterile spot became the bone of dissension between the British and Burmahs, and involved them in a tedious war, detrimental in the highest degree to both parties,—the one in a pecuniary point of view, the other by the dismemberment of those provinces which it had been years in obtaining, and which had cost a profusion of blood. At the close of 1823, a party of Burmahs landed at Shapuree,

during the night, expelled the Sepoys who were stationed there, and took possession of the island; whilst, about the same time, numerous predatory bands issued from Assam and Munnipoor, cutting off our elephant-hunters, and plundering our villagers, but invariably retiring before the small detachments which were sent in pursuit of them.

To our remonstrances no attention was paid, and one or two little skirmishes took place: Shapuree was easily recaptured, and one of the Company's gun-brigs stationed opposite, to protect it; but the commander, a Mr. Chew, possessing more curiosity than prudence, was persuaded by the Burmahs to meet them on shore, when they instantly seized him and his attendants, and marched them to Arracan, where they were detained some days, and finally released.

Our eastern frontier, at this juncture, was very scantily provided with troops, the whole force consisting of a few regiments of Sepoys, which, according to the usual arrangement of the native part of the Indian army, were scattered over the district in parties of twenty and thirty; so that if required to act in a body, it would take great time to collect them, and then, probably, the opportunity of acting with advantage would be lost.

This was latterly unfortunately verified; and we found that, by exposing ourselves to the chance of defeat, we not only deprived the Sepoys of their most invigorating principle, self-confidence, but al-

lowed the courage of our adversaries to rise in the opposite degree; thus inducing them to offer us a resistance, which one victory in the outset would have proved to them as being quite hopeless.

In the commencement of 1824, the Burmahs had pushed several small parties into Sylhet, and constant skirmishes took place, which, ending in our favour, had given the small force on that frontier a contempt for the enemy, which proved highly disastrous.

Lieutenant-colonel Bowen, who commanded a force of fifteen hundred Sepoys, with two six-pounders, had for some time been rapidly driving in the advanced posts of the enemy, who at last took up a position at Doodputlee on the frontier of Sylhet, where, to the amount of two thousand men, they awaited, in a stockade, the approach of the British.

On the 21st February Colonel Bowen made his appearance before Doodputlee, and attempted to carry it by assault; but was totally repulsed, with the loss of five officers and one hundred and fifty men, and obliged to withdraw his troops, and take up a defensive position to the rear.

Contented with the advantage they had gained, and not wishing to await another attack from a larger force, the Burmahs, on the 23rd February, evacuated the work.

After this disaster there was little doubt what line of policy the government would pursue; the affront was too galling, and no remedy remained but vigor-

ous and active measures; accordingly, the Governor-general in council issued a long manifesto, declaring the causes of complaint we had against the Burmahs, and finally proclaiming war against the court of Ava.

The commander-in-chief, Sir Edward Paget, was now in the interior, but in his absence the government issued the necessary orders for the different regiments to hold themselves in readiness for active service, and similar orders were sent round to Madras, it being determined that Rangoon should be the point of attack.

This town was selected, from the circumstance of its being the principal mercantile port in the empire, and, from its situation on the most navigable branch of the Irrawaddy, likely to ensure to us the navigation of that stream, and enable the army to move up the country by water, should hostilities continue: it was, however, supposed, that the Burman government would make immediate concessions, when they heard of the invasion. In this we were completely disappointed.

The country round Rangoon was said to be productive of supplies, the inhabitants were also stated as likely to offer us assistance in manning their boats; and as, during the prevalence of the south west monsoon, and rainy season, the passage to the capital was performed in a short time, the setting in of the rains was considered rather an advantage than otherwise.

Every exertion was now made to send a consider-

able force to Rangoon. Tonnage was immediately taken up to a very great extent; the arsenal at Fort William was called upon; gun-boats were fitted up; and the government at Madras received orders to make similar preparations, but to a larger extent.

The Diana steam-vessel, which had been built on speculation by private individuals, was purchased by government for ten thousand pounds, as it was thought likely to be serviceable in stemming the rapid currents of the Irrawaddy. Troops were ordered to the eastern frontier, and His Majesty's thirteenth light infantry and thirty-eighth regiment, eighteen hundred strong, the fortieth regiment, Bengal native infantry, and two companies of foot artillery, were directed to embark at Calcutta.

The command of the united force from the two presidencies was given to Colonel Sir A. Campbell, K.C.B., who was appointed Brigadier-general; an officer who had commanded a division of the Portuguese army during the Peninsular war, and was much distinguished. Colonel Macbean, fifty-fourth regiment, received the command of the Madras division, with the rank of Brigadier-general, and Colonel M'Creagh, thirteenth light infantry, that of the division from Bengal. The whole force was to rendezvous at Port Cornwallis in the Great Andaman Island, and thence proceed to Rangoon.

In the political department Major Canning took the lead, and Sir A. Campbell was associated with him as joint commissioner for the affairs of Ava.

The former, from his long residence in Ava, was supposed fully qualified to fulfil the situation intrusted to him, and it was principally in consequence of his advice that government was induced to select Rangoon as the point of attack.

So many years had now elapsed since the British army had been engaged, that the greatest enthusiasm pervaded all the troops when they heard they were to exchange the quiet life of a cantonment, for the more active and entertaining scenes of the field; and the embarkation for Ava was looked forward to with the greatest delight. Numbers of young officers who had entered the army since 1815, and had been debarred an opportunity of joining in the more arduous duties of their profession, hailed, with the sincerest pleasure, this chance of seeing service, and perhaps bringing themselves into notice; whilst those of an inquiring mind had a prospect before them replete with amusement, as they were entering on a field hitherto but little open to the inquiries of travellers.

In all ranks the same feeling existed; and, fortunately, neither time nor subsequent difficulties had the effect of diminishing it.

At the end of March, the preparations for that part of the expedition which was to start from Calcutta were completed, and, on the 5th of April, the troops were directed to embark at the Cooly Bazar, and drop down the river.

In addition to the transports and H. M. ship

Larne, Captain Marryat, was a small squadron of gun-boats, hastily fitted up for the occasion. They had originally been river pinnaces, and were consequently very slight in their construction; but, having been strengthened and provided with carronades and swivels, seemed likely to be serviceable on the Irrawaddy. Twenty of the Company's row-boats also formed part of the naval force, and proved a very useful portion of it. On the bow they mounted a nine-pounder carronade, and were equally adapted for sailing or rowing.

As the whole force was to rendezvous at Port Cornwallis, it became unnecessary for the transports to sail in company, and they were accordingly directed to make the best of their way thither; so that by the 17th April, the greater part of the fleet had passed the Sand-heads, and with a fair breeze was sailing down the bay of Bengal. On the 26th we made the land, and at day-break on the 3rd of May, found ourselves in the midst of about twenty ships belonging to the fleet from Madras. The scene was altogether very gratifying; the land, distant about six miles, rose boldly and abruptly from the water's edge, and consisted of a succession of mountains piled one above the other, until united in a peak by the Saddle Mountain—the summit of which, piercing through the surrounding clouds, presented the appearance of a small black rock in the centre of a vast ocean. The mountains were covered with verdure from their summits down to the rocks where the surf

was dashing; and the ships that were sailing near the shore, seemed like so many white specks, when contrasted with the stupendous scenery which arose behind them.

To one who had been for any length of time a resident of Bengal, and whose eye was accustomed to the flat and uninteresting district in which Calcutta is situated, the sight of mountainous features, such as now lay before us, was equally novel and pleasing. We therefore viewed the Andaman with an uncommon degree of satisfaction; and this feeling increased as we approached the shore, and the romantic scenery which distinguishes Port Cornwallis presented itself to our observation.

The morning had been intensely hot, with but little wind; and the lowering gloomy aspect of the clouds appeared to indicate the approach of one of those sudden gales peculiar to tropical climates, and which, although of short duration, are generally productive of mischief. We were just entering the harbour when the squall came on: in a moment it took us completely aback, and deluged the decks with rain. Several other vessels came under its influence, and were driven out to sea. We were, however, more fortunate, and anchored in safety. The entrance to Port Cornwallis is extremely narrow; and on either side the shore, which is very abrupt, is adorned with the greatest variety of vegetation. On the left, the ground, rising gradually, joins the Saddle Mountain, the sombre, gloomy

aspect of which contrasted strongly, as we entered, with the light brilliant sunshine on our right. The centre of the channel appeared to be the scene of a conflict between the fair weather and the squall, whilst, in the distance, Port Cornwallis presented to us a basin smooth and tranquil as a beautiful lake.

We anchored in the midst of about thirty sail, the boats of which were plying about in every direction, practising the paddles they had been furnished with, in order to facilitate the disembarkation of the troops, by taking up less room than oars.

The British, several years ago, established a settlement at Port Cornwallis, with the view of converting it into a receptacle for convicts, many of whom were sent there under charge of a detachment of Sepoys; the plan however failed: the men fell off daily, from sickness; and this beautiful but deceptive spot was finally abandoned, after destroying one-half of the new settlers by the baneful effects of its climate.

The inhabitants are represented as a most savage and miserable race, almost destitute of the necessaries of life, and frequently dying from absolute starvation. They are diminutive in stature, and possessing most hideous features, differing materially from all the nations in their vicinity, with the exception of the inhabitants of the Nicobar Islands. Their habitations are formed with a few boughs of trees, and their food consists of the produce of the ocean, or, indeed, almost anything they can lay their hands

upon. Instances have been related of their voracity which are quite disgusting; but still there is no fact known which convicts them of the dreadful habit of devouring human flesh, with which they have been taxed. Their weapons are the bow, arrow, and dart; with the latter they are very expert in striking fish. Nature, in one instance, has provided for their wants, by the immense quantity of oysters and other shell-fish to be found on the rocks of Port Cornwallis; but when this food fails, and bad weather prevents any other kind of fishing, the poor wretches have literally nothing to exist upon.

We went on shore to the watering-place, and attempted to penetrate into the interior; but, after having proceeded a very few yards, were obliged to retrace our steps, the underwood being quite impassable. The trees grow to a very great height, and are completely joined together by a variety of parasite plants, which, running among the low brambles on the ground, render it impracticable to move through them.

A few wood-pigeons, and a brace of water-fowl, were the only living creatures we saw during our stay on the island. Oysters in abundance were adhering to the rocks; and, at low water, we provided ourselves with hatchets, and succeeded in procuring a great number. They were small, and of a nice flavour.

It was said that several arrows had been fired at our people on shore, without any one being visi-

ble*. Traces of inhabitants, however, existed; for a party having landed at the entrance of the harbour, heard a noise and rustling in the bushes, as if some one was running away; and, proceeding to the spot from whence it issued, found a few miserable huts, in which were some human teeth, and a few cockle-shells suspended from the roof.

On the 4th of May, Commodore Grant, in his Majesty's ship Liffey, sailed into port, and assumed the command of the fleet. The naval force now consisted of his Majesty's ships Liffey, Larne, Sophie, and Slaney, several Company's cruisers, and forty sail of transports, having on board, in addition to the troops before mentioned, the Madras European regiment, his Majesty's forty-first, and six regiments of Sepoys, which, with the increase of a brigade, formed by his Majesty's eighty-ninth and two regiments of Madras Native Infantry, expected in a few days, would make the whole of our force amount to nearly ten thousand men, including a battalion of Madras pioneers and a large proportion of artillery.

* In 1825, a ship, with a detachment of his Majesty's forty-fifth regiment on board, having touched at Port Cornwallis, for water, the natives attacked the boats, and could only be repelled by fire-arms.

CHAPTER II.

Leave the Andaman Islands—Detachment sent to Cheduba—Enter the Rangoon River—Land at Rangoon—European residents released from confinement—Description of Rangoon—Deserted by the Inhabitants—Shoe-Dagon Pagoda—Skirmish at Kemundine—Fire-rafts—Rains set in—Pickets constantly attacked—Action at Joazong on the 28th May.

The fleet did not finally leave Port Cornwallis until the 7th, when a fine breeze springing up, we soon lost sight of the Andamans.

The twentieth regiment, Bengal Native infantry, and two companies of his Majesty's thirteenth light infantry, under Brigadier M'Creagh, parted from us the same day, under convoy of his Majesty's ship Slaney, and proceeded to attack Cheduba, a small but fertile island, situated on the west coast of Arracan, in latitude 18° 48′ N., longitude 93° 11′ E. A small detachment, likewise, sailed for the mouth of the Bassien river, for the purpose of capturing the island of Negrais.

The run of the fleet from the Andamans to Elephant point was very rapid, and on the 10th we entered the Rangoon river, and anchored two miles from its mouth, in order to enable the remainder of the fleet to assemble.

The country at the mouth of the river is flat and uninteresting, and very similar to the banks of the

Hoogley. The ground is laid out in paddy * fields, and several villages are scattered around. At one of these, opposite the place of anchorage, was a chokey or watchhouse, whence, on the appearance of any ship, a war-boat pushed off, and examined her. Two days before the arrival of the fleet, a small gun-boat, called the Powerful, manned by Lascars, entered the river, on the supposition that the fleet had preceded her; and having anchored near this chokey, was immediately boarded, and taken possession of by the Burmahs, who contented themselves with sending the tindal to Rangoon, and left the rest of the crew on board under a guard. The Larne came in the next morning, having preceded the fleet, in order to ascertain the passage over the bar; and the moment she dropped anchor, the war-boat pushed off and came alongside, but finding her to be an armed vessel, made the best of its way back to the shore, and the guard on board the Powerful following the example, the little gun-boat soon changed masters. As the ships successively arrived, we could perceive the inhabitants taking the alarm, and with bundles on their heads, running into the interior; whilst a good deal of bustle seemed to exist in the chokey, which was accounted for next morning, by our observing that, during the night, they had nearly encircled it with a timber stockade!

At 11 o'clock on the 11th May, the Liffey gave the

* Paddy is the name for rice in the husk, and is generally used by the residents in India to denote rice-plantations.

signal for weighing, and, leading the van, was followed by the other ships in succession. The wind and tide were both in our favour, and therefore, as the distance was only twenty-four miles, we arrived off Rangoon early in the evening. Half way was another chokey, where a battery had been hastily erected, and mounted with two old iron guns, with which the Burmahs fired at the leading ships, but without a shot striking; however the compliment being returned with rather more effect by us, they desisted.

At a sudden turn of the river, Rangoon opened on our sight, but, far from having a brilliant appearance, presented merely an assemblage of wooden houses, surrounded by a teak stockade, the general effect of which was extremely dismal. The country in the immediate vicinity recompensed us, in some measure, for this disappointment, being studded with pagodas, the golden spires of which shone through the trees, and contributed much to enliven the prospect. Rangoon is situated on the left of the river, which is about eight hundred yards wide, and Dalla, or rather Maindhu, a large town, on the right bank. At the latter place, no attempt was made to oppose us, but from Rangoon three batteries opened on the fleet: the principal of these was on the jettee at the King's wharf, an old mass of teak piles, on which about a dozen guns were mounted, and where, on a flag-staff, the Burman colours were flying. From this spot they actually dared to fire at the Liffey, which then giving them a couple of broadsides, dismounted every gun,

and made them retire with precipitation. At this juncture, Mr. Hough, an American missionary, was sent on board the Liffey, by the Rayhoon of Rangoon, with a message to the General, acquainting him that the English residents were all in irons, and ordered to be executed.

Sir A. Campbell immediately sent him back with an intimation that, if any of the English were touched, he would revenge their death most severely.

The troops were then ordered to disembark, and effected their landing without firing a shot, or scarcely seeing a single Burman.

Three men lying dead, and the broken gun-carriages, were the only vestiges of the injury done by the fire from the frigate. The town was completely deserted. It seemed, indeed, incredible whither the inhabitants could have fled to, within such a short space of time; and, as night was coming on, we could not proceed in search of them: the troops, therefore, remained in and about the town; and the next morning were placed in positions, in two lines, resting on the Great Pagoda, and the town. On entering the terrace of the Great Pagoda, the advanced guard discovered, in a miserable dark cell, four of the European residents at Rangoon, who were ironed, and had been otherwise maltreated; the others had been released by us the evening before, so that we had now the satisfaction of knowing that none of our countrymen were subjected to the cruelty of the Burman chieftains. It appears that, on the evening of

the day we entered the river, Mr. Sarkies, an Armenian merchant, had invited the greater part of the Europeans to dine with him at a house about a mile from Rangoon. Dinner was scarcely over, when a messenger rushed in and said that five large ships were entering the river. To this but little attention was paid, when it was rumoured that more were coming up, and Sarkies was ordered to the presence of the Rayhoon, who remarked that it was very extraordinary so many ships should enter the river: Sarkies answered that several were daily expected, and it was probably those which had arrived; but shortly after, forty-five sail being reported, the Rayhoon's fears were confirmed, and he instantly ordered all the Europeans to be confined in the Custom-house, whither they were taken in irons. After some time spent in debating what measures should be taken, they were brought out for execution, but providentially the fire of the Liffey becoming very sharp, and some shots striking the adjacent houses, the Burmahs thought it better to secure their own lives, before they took those of their prisoners, and therefore marched them, with a small escort, out of the town, when they were rescued by our troops. The Burmahs had left all their property untouched, with the exception of the fowling-pieces, and other arms, which they seized.

In the Custom-house, which was used as an arsenal and store, were found about eighty pieces of heavy artillery, some serviceable, but the greater part so

old and honeycombed as not to be of the slightest use: they must have been accumulating for ages: every nation which ever held a footing in the East, having apparently contributed: English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese had severally given their quota. A large number of teak beams and planks were piled on the banks of the river, and two fine ships, about three hundred tons each, were lying in dock, but belonged to our ally the Imaun of Muscat. These were the only objects of any value which the greatest mercantile port in the Burman empire could boast; indeed, if ever riches took up their abode at Rangoon, they chose a most unpromising exterior, every house bearing the stamp of filth and poverty.

Built on the left bank of the river by the great Alomprah, in commemoration of his victories, Yangoon, or Rangoon, offers but a very poor sample of Burman opulence. Its shape is oval; and round the town is a wooden stockade formed of teak piles, driven a few feet into the ground, and in some places twenty feet high. The tops of these are joined by beams transversely placed, and at every four feet is an embrasure on the summit of the wall, which gives it a good deal the appearance of ancient fortification. A wet ditch protects the town on three sides, the other is on the bank of the river.

The interior consists of four principal streets intersecting each other at right angles, on the sides of which are ranged, with a tolerable degree of regularity, the huts of the inhabitants. These are solely

built with mats and bamboos, not a nail being employed in their formation: they are raised invariably two or three feet from the ground or rather swamp in which Rangoon is situated, thereby allowing a free passage for the water with which the town is inundated after a shower, and at the same time affording shelter to fowls, ducks, pigs, and pariah dogs, an assemblage which, added to the inmates of the house, place it on a par with an Irish hovel. The few brick houses to be seen are the property of foreigners, who are not restricted in the choice of materials for building, whereas the Burmahs are, on the supposition that, were they to build brick houses, they might become points of resistance against the government. But even these buildings are erected so very badly, that they have more the appearance of prisons than habitations. Strong iron bars usurp the place of windows, and the only communication between the upper and lower stories is by means of wooden steps placed outside. Only two wooden houses existed much superior to the rest, and these were the palace of the Maywoon, and the Rondaye, or Hall of Justice. The former of these, an old, dilapidated building, would have been discreditable as a barn in England, and the latter was as bad.

The foreign residents at Rangoon form the most heterogeneous assemblage that can well be conceived: English, French, Spaniards, Portuguese, Armenians, Persians, Arabs, Parsees, Greeks, and innumerable other tribes, resort thither, to mend their broken for-

tunes and seek a source of wealth in this country, denied them in their own. Many enter the service of the Burman monarch, and not unfrequently hold posts of importance under the government, which, however, never exceed that of Shabander, or collector of foreign customs. This office, when we arrived at Rangoon, was held by a Spaniard of the name of Llansigo, then at Ava. Mr. Sarkies Manook, an Armenian merchant, was acting for him, and having a good deal of influence with the Burman authorities, was supposed by us to be in communication with them; but on being examined, he was fully exonerated, and subsequently became very useful to the political department of the expedition. Messrs. Wade and Hough, members of the American mission, were residing at Rangoon with their wives, and Mr. and Mrs. Judson were unfortunately at Ava. Some agents of English merchants, and a few adventurers, completed the list of foreigners in Rangoon.

The population of Rangoon and its suburbs was estimated at between forty and fifty thousand, of which about fifteen hundred were the priesthood and followers attendant on the Shoe Dagon and other pagodas. Of regular troops there were none, with the exception of from four to five hundred attendants on the Rayhoon, or collector of the revenue, who held the supreme command during the absence of the Maywoon of Henzawuddy.

Rangoon is the great mart for the fine teak wood which is produced on the mountains of Ava, and the

Galadzet hills, whence it is floated down the river in large rafts. Several ships have been built with it by Messrs. Snowball and Turner, who have been established there as shipwrights for many years past; and the expense is found to be much less than at Calcutta, the price of labour being but trifling.

From Rangoon, also, large quantities of dried fish and rice are annually sent up the river for the consumption of the upper provinces; and when we took possession of the town, we discovered innumerable granaries, and many large boats laden with fish.

Through the means of a few stragglers who came into Rangoon, proclamations were sent out, inviting the inhabitants to return, and assuring them protection of lives and property. The strictest orders were issued to prevent plunder, and a Burmah having claimed several head of cattle which had been seized for the use of the army, they were immediately restored, in order to prove the sincerity of our protestations; but none of the inhabitants availed themselves of our offers, and we understood that the officers of government were driving the women and children into the interior, as hostages for the good conduct of the men. It was, however, hoped that, after the first impression of terror, caused by the invasion of an unknown enemy, had subsided, the Burmahs would be induced to resume their habitations. In the mean time we were placed in the singular predicament of capturing a town which a day or two before had contained several thousand resi-

dents, but of whom not one individual remained on our taking possession of it.

Two miles north of Rangoon, on the highest point of a low range of hills, stands the stupendous pagoda called the Shoe Dagon Prah, or Golden Dagon, one of the most revered religious edifices in the empire. The approach to it, on the south face, is through a fine row of mango, cocoa-nut, and other beautiful trees leading from the town, and shading a capital road, at each side of which are monasteries, or kioums, of great antiquity, and carved all over with curious images and ornaments, whilst every now and then the attention is attracted by huge images of griffins and other hideous monsters, guarding the entrance to different pagodas. At the end of this road rises, abruptly, the eminence on which the Dagon stands. It is encircled by two brick terraces, one above the other; and on the summit rises the splendid pagoda, covered with gilding, and dazzling the eyes by the reflection of the rays of the sun. The ascent to the upper terrace is by a flight of stone steps, protected from the weather by an ornamented roof. The sides are defended by a balustrade representing a huge crocodile, the jaws of which are supported by two colossal figures of a male and female Pulloo, or evil genius, who, with clubs in their hands, are, emblematically, supposed to be guarding the entrance of the temple. On the steps, the Burmahs had placed two guns, to enfilade the road; and, when

I first saw this spot, two British soldiers were mounting guard over them, and gave an indescribable interest to the scene—it seemed so extraordinary to view our arms thus domineering amidst all the emblems and idols of idolatry, that, by a stretch of fancy, I could almost suppose I saw the grim monsters viewing with anger and humiliation the profanation of their sanctuary.

After ascending the steps, which are very dark, you suddenly pass through a small gate, and emerge into the upper terrace, where the great Pagoda, at about fifty yards distance, rears its lofty head in perfect splendour. This immense octagonal gilt-based monument is surrounded by a vast number of smaller pagodas, griffins, sphinxes, and images of the Burman deities. The height of the tee, three hundred and thirty-six feet from the terrace, and the elegance with which this enormous mass is built, combine to render it one of the grandest and most curious sights a stranger can notice. From the base it assumes the form of a ball, or dome, and then gracefully tapers to a point of considerable height, the summit of which is surmounted by a tee, or umbrella, of open iron-work, from whence are suspended a number of small bells, which are set in motion by the slightest breeze, and produce a confused though not unpleasant sound.

The Pagoda is quite solid, and has been increased to its present bulk by repeated coverings of brick, the work of different kings, who, in pursuance of the

national superstition, imagined that, by so doing, they were performing meritorious acts of devotion.

It was confidently asserted when we arrived, that a large chamber existed in the centre of the Pagoda, full of treasure; but, on examination, the report proved to be unfounded.

Facing each of the cardinal points, and united with the Pagoda, are small temples of carved wood, filled with colossal images of Gaudma. The eastern temple—or, as we called it, the golden—is a very pretty edifice. The style of building a good deal resembles the Chinese: it is three stories high, and is surmounted by a small spire, bearing a tee: the cornices are covered in the most beautiful manner, and with a variety and neatness of conception scarcely to be surpassed; and the whole is supported by a number of gilt pillars. In the interior, in a wire cage, is a large image of Gaudma, about twelve feet high; it is made of brick plastered over, and represents him in a sitting posture, the legs bent under him, and his hands resting on them; his countenance is smiling, and behind his ears hang two flaps suspended from the hair, which is woolly, and might almost induce the supposition that Buddha was of Moorish origin. Doubts, however, exist whether this may not be intended to represent a head-dress. The left breast is uncovered; but over the right is thrown a gilt robe.

Round the foot of the pagoda are ranged innumerable small stone pillars, intended to support lamps

on days of rejoicing; and in their vicinity are large stone and wooden vases, meant for the purpose of receiving the rice and other offerings made by the pious.

The terrace on which the Dagon rests, faces the cardinal points, and is nine hundred feet long, six hundred and eighty-five broad, and elevated above the inferior terrace by a wall about fifteen feet high. The second terrace, in like manner, rises above the road; and two other terraces, not faced with brick, complete the elevation of the pagoda hill, which is about two hundred feet above the level of the river. There are four entrances and flights of steps, of which the east is the principal. In the area are a number of small temples and pagodas; and, in the former, numerous gigantic gods are seen sitting in grand conclave, surrounded by all the attributes of divinity, such as gilt chattahs, tees, vases, and wrapped in yellow cloths, the sacerdotal colour. Since the arrival of the British, the holy purposes of these temples were of course suspended, and others suggested by our necessities substituted. The want of materials for building, and the expediency of occupying the Dagon as a military post, rendered it of the first importance that troops should be quartered in them; and it therefore followed that in those peaceful sanctuaries, where, in days of yore, the quiet Poonghis* were wont to sing the praises of their deity, a British soldier was now seen cleaning

* Priests.

his musket, or smoking a cigar, a chakoh sacrilegiously adorned the head of the god Buddha, whilst his arms supported red jackets, knapsacks, and other accompaniments of a soldier's equipment, and rendered the scene altogether one of much singularity.

At each entrance to the Pagoda, were placed some very handsome bells of great antiquity, and one in particular, from its immense size, was very deserving of notice. It was in the north-west angle of the area, and hung on a large beam, supported by two pillars. The metal was a foot thick, and the diameter of the mouth six feet. The handle was ornamented with a couple of griffins, and the body covered with inscriptions, in the Burman and Pali languages. In the composition of this bell, it appeared that much gold and silver had been employed. These bells are used by the Burmans, under the idea of calling the attention of the Deity to their prayers; the supplicant, previous to presenting his offering, striking on them with a deer's horn.

We made an attempt, in April 1825, to send the great bell to Calcutta, and succeeded, with much labour and difficulty, in embarking it on a raft to carry it alongside the Sulimany. The raft pushed off; thousands of Burmahs were looking on, deploring the loss of so revered a relic of former times, when on a sudden it heeled over and sunk. There it remained for some months; but in January 1826, we raised it from the river, with the assistance of

the population of Rangoon, and replaced it in the Pagoda.

The origin of the Shoe Dagon Prah, and the date of its foundation, are both unknown, or at least so completely enveloped in mystery and fiction, that nothing certain can be stated respecting its antiquity. The Burmahs suppose that, like the Shoemadoo at Pegue, it was partly the work of spirits and of men, and that it is now several thousand years old; whilst the number of Egyptian symbols, such as sphinxes, crocodiles, and griffins, which are annexed to it, would lead to a supposition that a connexion had in ancient times existed between the religions of both countries; but this conjecture is supported by no other testimony. Many tall trees throw a delightful shade over the square of the Dagon, and the view from the parapet is very grand. To the north-east the mountains near the Sitang river bound the horizon, and the intervening space is occupied by one vast plain, diversified here and there by wood, and intersected by the Pegue and Moriec rivers, which, winding through the trees, form a pretty coup-d'œil.

Looking more to the southward, the Fort and Pagoda of Syriam are seen, surrounded by a dense forest. The Rangoon river next appears, covered with shipping; and lastly, Rangoon itself and the approaches to it, ornamented by innumerable Pagodas. The plains of Dalla on the opposite bank complete the back ground, whilst in the immediate neighbourhood of the Pagoda, a beautiful lake on

the east, and the variety and singularity of the surrounding edifices, add much to the diversity of the prospect.

Considered as a military post, and with reference to Rangoon, the Dagon was of the utmost importance; its elevated brick terraces, which obviated the necessity of additional fortifications, and its commanding situation, rendered it the key of our whole position, and on this account two companies were quartered within the Pagoda, and two regiments stationed at its base.

The two streets which lead from the Dagon to Rangoon, were lined with wooden houses, built in a comparatively superior manner, and intended to serve as habitations for the priests and devotees or pilgrims, who came from afar to pay their respects to the Dagon. In these our troops were cantoned, leaving one regiment of Native Infantry to garrison the Rangoon stockade; and as the houses were built of teak wood, elevated from the ground, and the greater part of them well thatched or tiled, it was hoped that the troops would not suffer any ill effects from the approaching rainy monsoon, the first shower of which we experienced on the 16th of May. Up to this date nothing occurred relative to the operations of the army; no inhabitants had come in, nor, from what we heard, was there any prospect that they would return to their houses: a few boats were procured and ordered to be prepared for the transport of troops; but no

boatmen were forthcoming, and under those circumstances we began to entertain doubts whether we should be able to procure fresh provisions for the army.

On the 15th, a few boats which had been sent forward to reconnoitre, were fired at from some breast-works about six miles distant, at a village called Kemundine; and the next morning Sir A. Campbell directed Captain Birch, with the grenadier company of the 38th regiment, to embark in some men-of-war and row-boats, under Lieutenant Wilkinson, R. N., and drive the enemy from this point.

The first breast-work was carried with but little loss, but at the second the Burmahs stood very resolutely. Lieutenant Kerr of the 38th was killed, Lieutenant Wilkinson, R.N., severely wounded, and twenty-two men killed or wounded. The Burman loss was considerable. In the breast-work, lying among the slain, was seen a very pretty young girl, about eighteen years of age, shot through both legs, and past recovery; it was impossible to bring her away, and therefore the detachment was obliged to abandon the poor girl to her melancholy fate. We afterwards learned that she was the young wife of the Rayhoon of Rangoon. A third breast-work at Awa Bock, or, as we named it, Pagoda Point, was entered without opposition, and destroyed. The same day that this skirmish took place at Kemundine, General Macbean proceeded on a reconnoitring excursion inland with one thousand men; he fell in

with the Rayhoon and a few Burmahs, who instantly fled, leaving in our hands two gilt chattahs*, emblems of his authority.

During their march, this detachment observed the first instance of that barbarous system which distinguished the Burman mode of warfare during our occupation of Rangoon; for, when passing through a wood not far from our lines, they discovered a number of headless and mutilated bodies, some tied to trees, others lying on the ground, the victims of the severe policy of the Burman chiefs, who had thus punished them, either on suspicion of favouring our cause, or of wishing to return to Rangoon.

Although we were not aware of any Burman army existing in our vicinity at this juncture, as it was impossible that Sykiah Woonghee, who had been appointed Viceroy of Pegue, could have yet arrived with seven thousand men he was said to be bringing, yet it was easy enough to see that the means of resistance were organising unknown to us; and as we were informed that, in times of danger, all males, capable of bearing arms, could be summoned to the field, there was good reason to suppose that before many days elapsed, we should have an opportunity of trying our strength with the enemy, whose conduct on the 16th had given us a very favourable opinion of their prowess. The sentries and pickets were nightly harassed by alarms, and being fired at from the jungle which grew close under our lines; it

* Umbrellas.

was impossible for any one to go ten yards into the country, without running the risk of being taken prisoner. Not a single individual had joined us from the interior, and whatever information we did receive, was of so suspicious a nature, that no reliance could be placed upon it. Whilst in this situation, and that it was evident to the entire of the army that nothing but obstacles tantamount to absolute impossibility, would delay the forward movement of our Commander, the rains, which, as I have above remarked, commenced on the 16th, set in with such violence, as to inundate almost the whole extent of country which lay before us, and rendered a march by land altogether impracticable. On the other hand the means of conveying the troops by water were totally inadequate to that service, not through want of exertion, and still less of inclination, on the part of our gallant naval auxiliaries, (of whose zealous and active assistance during the whole of this arduous contest too much cannot be said in praise,) but because we had not had time to replace the boats which the enemy had withdrawn with others of our own construction, nor was the number of our boatmen sufficient to man them, had they been at our disposal.

The only alternative which could be adopted, was to remain on the defensive at Rangoon, till the end of the rains, when, if means of conveyance could be procured, we should have nothing to apprehend from climate, and Sir Archibald's determination to this

effect was formed accordingly. Our shipping were now daily and nightly exposed to a great deal of danger and annoyance from an engine of destruction much confided in by our invisible enemy, and which, if properly managed, might have caused us much injury. This was a large raft formed of pieces of wood and beams tied together, but loosely, so that if it came athwart a ship's bows, it would swing round and encircle her. On this were placed every sort of firewood, and other combustibles, such as jars of petroleum or earth oil, which, rising in a flame, created a tremendous blaze, and as this raft extended across the river, it often threatened to burn a great portion of our fleet.

Rafts of this description were chiefly launched from Kemundine, where the greater number of them were constructed; but fortunately the river made a bend a little above the anchorage, and the current running strong towards the opposite shore, the rafts were not unfrequently grounded, and thus rendered useless: whilst, on the other hand, the precautions adopted by our naval officers of anchoring a number of beams across the river, in most instances effectually arrested those unwieldy masses in their descent towards Rangoon. This pertinacity of the Burmahs, in trying to destroy our shipping and stores, proved them to be by no means deficient in either foresight or ingenuity; and a few days later afforded us ample indication, that if their system of attack and of defence on land was not more formidable in its execution,

the fault lay in the inefficacy of the means employed in it (viewed in the light of discipline), and not in the judgment or ability with which it had been organised.

At the foot of the north face of the Pagoda, is a small pond, which, from its medicinal qualities, had, long before our arrival, obtained the name of the *Scotch Tank;* and on the other side rises a small hill, on which were two or three good houses, the residences of a Peguer named Mondimaa, who had charge of the Pagoda. This little eminence became of much importance during the investment of Rangoon, but at present it was merely considered eligible for an advanced post, as it in some measure overlooked the surrounding forest, and on this account two companies of the 38th regiment, with a piece of artillery, were posted there.

From thence, on the 27th May, a small Burman picquet, composed of ten or twelve men, was observed on a little open space of ground on Woody Hill, sitting under cover of their enormous broad-brimmed hats, and quietly watching what was passing in the lines. Wishing to ascertain whether they formed part of a larger force, or were merely stragglers, Captain Snodgrass, with a small party of an officer and twenty men of the 38th regiment, left the advanced post, and pursuing the Burman picquet, which instantly fled, came suddenly upon a small stockade thrown across the narrow road, and flanked on each side by a deep ravine. After exchanging a few shots with

the enemy, by which we had three men wounded, the little party charged into the work, and carried it, the Burmahs, about sixty in number, making their escape to the jungle.

Sir A. Campbell, concluding that the Burmahs seen on the preceding evening were the advanced guard of a larger body, determined on making a reconnoissance in person; and, on the morning of the 28th, advanced from the lines, accompanied by General Macbean and the staff.

His force consisted of two companies of the thirteenth light infantry, one hundred strong; the flank companies of the thirty-eighth regiment, two hundred; and a few native infantry, with a couple of guns.

When the detachment arrived at the small stockade, which was captured and partly destroyed the day before, we found it occupied by a party of the enemy, who were busily employed in repairing it, thus indicating the importance which they attached to the possession of this point, in consequence of its commanding the passage of the road. They immediately fled, and we pursued our march, winding through the wood, and occasionally receiving a shot from its recesses, or from marksmen concealed in trees out of our reach; and, at two miles distance from the Pagoda, entered the little village of Kokien, which had been set fire to and burnt in the morning. There the road left the forest and entered a swamp, over which a wooden bridge, about one hundred

yards long, had been thrown, and, at the end of it, we saw a body of men drawn up, apparently with the intention of disputing the passage. A round or two of shrapnell, however, soon dispersed them, and we continued our march without further interruption. The rain now began to pour in torrents, and we were obliged to leave the guns under charge of the Sepoys, the road becoming impassable for them; but with the three hundred of the thirteenth and thirty-eighth, we pushed on and entered a large plain, cultivated with rice. Here the ground was so completely deluged, that we were literally marching up to our knees in water, and the whole plain seemed to be in the same state. It was about half a mile broad, having the Moriec River on the right, and a thick jungle on the left. We had not proceeded far before we discovered, drawn up in an irregular line, a large body of the enemy, headed by two chieftains on horseback; and, from the heavy smoke in the jungle to the left, it seemed probable that some stockades were concealed there; but, as the rain continued pouring upon us, we could not distinguish any through the haze.

Our troops continued advancing in echellon, the light company of the thirty-eighth, on the left, skirting the jungle; the grenadiers, in the centre, on the plain; and the thirteenth, on the right: when, at a sudden turn, the light company observed a stockade, about a hundred yards distant, having a ravine full of water in front of it. A dead silence pervaded the

work; and Captain Piper, instantly forming his men in line, charged up to the stockade, and through the ravine, without firing a shot. When we were within about thirty yards, the Burmahs gave a most terrific yell, accompanied by beating of drums, tomtoms, and other instruments, and opened a sharp and well-directed fire, by which we suffered severely. As the enemy was covered by a thick palisade, with loop-holes, we saw not a man; and even if we had, our fire could not have proved serviceable, as not a single musket would go off, in consequence of the wet; whereas the Burmahs were protected from the weather by sheds, and consequently their arms were uninjured.

On arriving at the foot of the work, after forcing the way through a capital abâtis, the entrance was found barred up, and the height of the work, and the want of ladders, prevented escalading: the men for some time were, therefore, exposed to the assaults of the enemy, who threw out spears, and tried every effort to drive us off. They were unavailing: the passage was forced, and the troops rushed in with the bayonet. Finding this face of the work carried, a number of Burmahs rushed with their spears to the opposite side, and there awaited the approach of the assailants; but a section dashing at them with the bayonet, annihilated almost the whole. They seemed quite desperate; and, though death was staring them in the face in every direction, not one called out for quarter. They all died nobly! One man, though

disarmed, seized a soldier's musket by the bayonet, and wresting it off with one hand, struck him in the face with the other. Another made his escape from the stockade, but returned to carry off something he had forgotten. In fact, their contempt of death seemed quite inconceivable.

The thirteenth light infantry, in the meantime, were partly drawn up in skirmishing order, to keep in check the Burman line, whilst the remainder, with the grenadiers of the thirty-eighth regiment, having succeeded in rendering their firelocks serviceable, were keeping down the fire of a second, and a larger stockade. Sir A. Campbell, who was standing with them, and whose plume of feathers rendered him a very conspicuous mark, fortunately escaped the effects of the Burman fire, which, from this second work, was becoming very heavy; and seeing the light company of the thirty-eighth was formed, he directed a simultaneous charge on two points of the work, both of which were highly successful. In advancing to the right to take the enemy in rear, the thirteenth lost a very fine young officer, Lieutenant Howard, who was stabbed in the side by a three-pronged fork: Lieutenants Michell and O'Halloran, of the thirty-eighth, had their legs shattered, and several men suffered from the resistance the Burmahs made inside the stockade, where they concealed themselves under the houses, and kept up a sharp fire.

Fully three hundred Burmahs fell in the two stockades, and this first action with them clearly pointed

out to us, that they were far from deficient in personal courage, and that only the determined coolness of a British soldier, and the bold, and to them novel use of the bayonet, could have decided this affair in our favour: their force was about seven thousand men, and of this number about fifteen hundred had garrisoned the stockades. Evening was now coming on fast, we were encumbered with between thirty and forty wounded, without any means of carrying them, except the officers' horses, and three or four doolies*; and Sir A. Campbell, therefore, determined on returning without attacking a small stockade a little farther on, having first made a forward movement with his troops to see whether the Burman line, which was still drawn up, would await our approach. It fell back as we advanced, and we then, after burning the two stockades of Joazong, recommenced the march home. The Burmahs followed us up to our lines, keeping, however, at some distance, and during the night fired constantly at the sentries, but attempted nothing more. Both the wounded officers had their legs amputated on the same evening, and Lieutenant Michell, after suffering acutely for a month, died of a locked jaw.

This skirmish with the Burmahs proved of great service to us eventually, as it pointed out to this people, hitherto puffed up with an excessive degree of vanity, that they were not invincible, and that

* A doolie is a species of litter, used in the East, to carry the wounded from the field of battle.

the white strangers were not quite so contemptible as they supposed: such, indeed, was the influence their confidence in their own prowess had over them on this occasion, that the affair above related may be considered almost as the only action where they behaved with determined resolution, after their fortified works had been penetrated by our troops.

The stockades of Joazong were of an irregular shape; the parapet was about four feet high, made of piles driven into the ground, and banked up by earth taken from a trench in the interior, of about three feet deep, so that a person standing in the trench was completely under cover from the fire of the assailants. In the face of the stockade large bamboos were fixed, which answered as loop-holes through which to fire, and large mats were strongly fastened on the outside of the parapet, so as to prevent the interior being seen, and also to preclude the possibility of getting over without scaling-ladders. But the most material defence of a stockade was in the abatis by which it was surrounded. This is made with branches of trees pointed at the end, and firmly and thickly planted in the ground; they are succeeded by rows of sharp bamboo spikes, which, in the heat of the moment, being unobserved, penetrate deep into the feet, and occasion wounds of the most painful nature; and the whole is surrounded by two rows of railings, so that if a good fire is kept up from the work itself, the obstacles to be surmounted are far from despicable.

The muskets which we captured in the stockades were in very bad order, and it is singular that not a single matchlock was found among them; nor during the whole of the war did I fall in with this description of fire-arms, although they are so very common in Hindostan and other parts of India. The jingal, a rough iron swivel, carrying sometimes a one-pound ball, but generally loaded with grape or small pieces of iron, is, in the hands of a Burman, a most formidable and unerring weapon. Swords and spears were also found in great quantity at Joazong, but there were no cannon.

The troops we encountered on the 28th May, were commanded by the Ex-Rayhoon of Rangoon, an old soldier of considerable talent and experience, and were composed principally of the inhabitants of Rangoon and the adjacent country; those in the stockades were the war-boatmen, the flower of the whole force. The following morning, General Macbean, with one thousand men, proceeded to Joazong, and found the enemy had retired. Unable to vent their rage on the living, the Burmahs had revenged themselves upon the dead, having dug up and dreadfully mutilated the bodies of two soldiers whom we had buried there!

CHAPTER III.

First attack on Kemundine, 3rd June—Flag of truce—War-boats—Scarcity of provisions—Attack and capture of Kemundine, 10th and 11th June—Cheduba taken—Attack on our lines, 1st July—Conscription—Burman Army—Artillery—Robberies committed—Dalla attacked—Burned by us—Action at Kumaroot and Pagoda Point, 8th July—Shumbah Woonghee killed—Gibson arrives.

The elevated situation of the terrace of the Dagon enabled us to obtain an extensive view of the forest which encircled us, and there all the idlers of the army used to resort, for the purpose of tracing the movements of the enemy. Their efforts were seldom unavailing, the clouds of smoke which rose in different parts of the jungle always pointing out, to a certainty, where the Burmahs were erecting stockades, or had posted pickets; and so very near did their workmen approach our lines, that, during the stillness of night, they could distinctly be heard felling trees, and calling out to each other. On the morning of the 30th May, a quantity of smoke being seen on the Kemundine road, it was supposed that the Burmahs were fortifying themselves in that direction; and Captain Piper, with the light company of the thirty-eighth regiment, who was ordered to proceed towards it in order to reconnoitre, fell in with an unfinished stockade, from which he drove the enemy with much loss.

During the last three weeks the Burmahs had

been far from inactive, as, besides other works, they had erected a large stockade at Kemundine, which extended half a mile along the banks of the river, and was garrisoned with a considerable force.

On the 3rd June, Sir A. Campbell determined to drive them from this position. Proceeding himself with part of the forty-first regiment, and the flotilla by water, he formed three divisions, of eight hundred men each, for the land attack. One of these, under Major Frith, was directed to march on Joazong, and intercept the enemy in that direction, whilst Colonels Smith and Hodgson, with the remaining columns, should attack the stockade. Owing to some mistake, these two columns failed in their attack on the works, and retired with the loss of a hundred men; and Sir A. Campbell with his force, being unsupported by the others, was obliged to withdraw, and drop down the stream.

This affair, and the good situation of Kemundine for annoying us, attached a considerable share of importance to it; and Sir A. Campbell, anxious to show the superiority of our artillery, and avoid the effusion of blood, in storming before a breach was made, directed the heavy guns to be landed, purposing, as soon as the necessary preparations should be ready, so to invest the stockade, that the enemy would have no opportunity of escaping. In the meantime, on the 9th, we were surprised by the arrival of two war-boats, carrying fifty men each, bearing a flag of truce, and having on board a man

who had formerly been in authority at Bassien, and the substance of whose mission was to inquire, "Why we came to Rangoon, and what we wanted?" He brought no credentials, and his visit appeared consequently to be merely for the purpose of gratifying his curiosity; but as it was hoped that this first step might lead to something like negociation, or at least open an intercourse with the Burman chieftains, the Envoy was treated with great politeness, and, after a conference with the commissioners, reconducted to his boats, which paddled off with great rapidity. These were the first war-boats we had seen, and, therefore, caused a great deal of interest.

The Burman war-boat is formed of the trunk of the magnificent teak tree, first roughly shaped, and then expanded by means of fire, until it attains sufficient width to admit two people, sitting abreast. On this a gunwale, rising a foot above the water, is fixed, and the stem and stern taper to a point, the latter being much higher than the other, and ornamented with fret-work and gilding. On the bow is placed a gun, sometimes of a nine-pounder calibre, but generally smaller, and the centre of the boat is occupied by the rowers, varying in number from twenty to a hundred, who in the large boats use the oar, and in the small ones, the paddle. A war-boat in motion is a very pleasing object. The rapidity with which it moves, its lightness and small surface above the water, the uniform pulling of the oar

falling in cadence with the songs of the boatmen, who, taking the lead from one of their number, join in chorus, and keep time with the dip of their oars; the rich gilding which adorns the boat, and the neat, uniform dress of the crew, place it, to the eye of a stranger, in a curious and interesting point of view: and in regard to appearance, induces him, when contrasting it with an English boat, to give the former the preference. In point of swiftness, our best men-of-war boats could not compete with them, and of this superiority they generally availed themselves when an action was impending.

The boats we had captured at Rangoon, and were cutting down for the transport of the army, were totally of a different nature. These, built on the same plan as ours are, but with flat bottoms, belonged to traders, and were solely adapted to the transport of merchandise. The stern, fancifully ornamented, rises two or three stages above the deck, and is the seat of the helmsman. The inside of the boat is filled with goods, and thatched over, leaving sufficient room underneath to accommodate two or three families—men, women, and children—who promiscuously take up their abode there.

This description of boat is not propelled by oars, but by long poles, the ends of which being placed against the shoulders of the boatmen, they run the whole length of the boat, and push her forward with considerable velocity. The space on which they act is formed by strong outriggers, on either side of the

boat, which answer the twofold purpose of preventing her upsetting, which she otherwise would do from the excess of top-weight, and of increasing her width and accommodation.

The third class of boat is that used throughout the country, and which, to those who inhabit the banks of rivers, becomes a necessary appendage, and, to many, a home. It is a mere canoe, decked with split bamboo, and partly covered in with mats, so as to afford shelter from the sun by day, and the dews by night. One man steers, and two others either row or paddle; but, when the wind is favourable, they use a sail. This is generally made at the moment, with the scarfs they wear over their shoulders, tied together. Two bamboos constitute the mast and yard, the sail being fastened between them; yet, with this fragile rigging, and with the gunwale of the boat almost under water with every puff of wind, they stem the most rapid currents at all seasons of the year, and, such is their skill in steering, seldom meet with an accident. It was in these boats that the majority of the inhabitants of Rangoon, and the adjacent villages, fled upon our approach; and these formed their only habitation during the many months they kept aloof from us.

The complete desertion of Rangoon by its inhabitants may, in the first instance, very naturally be attributed to the fear and distrust with which a semi-barbarous nation would view the encroachment of a power hitherto unknown to them; but when this

panic had in some measure subsided, and that they may have been inclined to return, the Burman chieftains, by establishing chokeys, or watchhouses, around us in every direction, cut off all communication with the city, and punished with death every individual who was seized in the attempt to penetrate this line of circumvallation. Similar precautions prevented the circulation of our proclamations, or at least frustrated their intent; and the consequence was, that our fresh provisions were completely exhausted at the beginning of June, and we were reduced to the necessity of living upon salt meat. This, therefore, became the food of the whole army, and even the hospitals received no better supplies. Unfortunately, no vegetables which might counteract the injurious effects of this nourishment were procurable; for, although various kinds of fruit, and particularly pine-apples, were growing in profusion outside of the lines, it was only when a detachment went out on duty against the enemy that they were brought to us by the soldiers belonging to it. Whilst in this situation, it happened, fortunately, that our attention was so frequently diverted from our privations, by the constant excursions we were obliged to make, to repel the encroachments of the Burmahs, that we had scarcely a moment to reflect upon them; and, therefore, the animated spirit with which the army had landed, was not in the least degree diminished by our protracted stay at Rangoon.

The artillery being disembarked on the 10th of June,

at two o'clock in the morning, about three thousand men marched out of the lines, and moved down the lower road to Kemundine. With them went four eighteen-pounders, several field-pieces, and the heavy mortars, which, from the circumstance of our not having a single animal for draught, were dragged by two regiments and the men of the artillery. This mode of transport, rendered particularly difficult from the muddy state of the roads, detained the column so long, that it was nine o'clock before the advance halted in front of a small stockade which commanded the road, and which it was therefore necessary to capture before we advanced farther.

The stockade, being made of teak piles and thin trunks of trees, was soon breached by a slanting fire from our guns; and a column, consisting of his Majesty's forty-first regiment and Madras European regiment, was directed to assault this point, whilst his Majesty's thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments stormed the stockade on the other flank. The troops moved off, and were received by a heavy fire, but soon effected their object, being gallantly led into the breach by Major Chambers, who received a severe wound, with a spear, in the face. On the other side, the four companies of the thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments, under Major Sale, were not less successful, having mounted the work by climbing on each other's shoulders. The place they entered was full of men, and divided from the breach by a second wall, which being taken in rear by the forty-

first, was not defended. We lost about thirty men, and the Burmahs one hundred and sixty. On this occasion the Burmahs reserved their fire in a most extraordinary manner; and, when the advance first appeared in front of the stockade, did not molest us, but, mounting on the ramparts, beckoned us to advance. Some of the officers stepped out, and went within a hundred yards of them, but still they did not fire a shot, intending, I suppose, to make us show the head of the column. The Burmahs behaved very well here; and when our shots were breaching the work, we could plainly see people inside widening the ditch where the opening was made. But this stockade was only an advanced work to the great Kemundine stockade, which lay about half a mile further on. We lost no time in advancing to it; and, in order completely to hem the Burmahs in, the flotilla was sent up the river, beyond the works, so as to prevent their escaping by water; whilst the land force proceeded through the jungle. The left of our line rested on the river, and the right was moving round the north of the stockade, thus completing a semicircle, when it was discovered that, in addition to the main work, two smaller ones existed further up, which it was impossible for us with our force to surround; a space of two hundred yards was therefore unavoidably left between our right and the river, it being exposed to the fire of both stockades. Night had already approached; the rain began to pour without intermission, and neither men nor

officers were sheltered from it, or had any cover, not even great coats. The night we passed in this situation was such as may easily be imagined. Soft mud for the bed of such as chose to lie down, and the trunk of a tree for a pillow; but so powerful an anodyne is fatigue, that, notwithstanding these disadvantages, accompanied by continued firing and the yells of the enemy, many slept soundly, or passed the night joyfully anticipating the approaching attack on the enemy.

The shouts of the Burmahs had a curious effect, much heightened by the wild scenery of the dark, gloomy forest which surrounded us: first a low murmur might be heard, rising as it were gradually in tone, and followed by the wild and loud huzza of thousands of voices—then, again, all was silence, save now and then a straggling shot or challenge from our own sentries; and soon after, another peal of voices would resound through the trees. This they continued all night; but towards morning the yells became fainter and fainter, and at daybreak they totally ceased.

During the night, batteries for eighteen-pounders and mortars were erected, and at daylight opened on the stockade. The fire of the enemy had slackened, but our fire made no impression on the rampart; for, being built of bamboo, the shot merely passed through without cutting it, the fibres of the wood expanding immediately, and filling up the holes which the shot had made. In the meantime

the advance sounded, and the storming parties advanced to the work; but not a little surprised on finding it evacuated: so completely, indeed, had the Burmahs overreached us, that we found not a single man killed or wounded within the stockade, to testify that the powder and shot which we had expended was productive of any effect.

A regiment was left behind, as a garrison for Kemundine; and the rest of the troops marched into cantonments, not a little annoyed at being so completely taken in by their inexperienced adversaries, whose escape it seems was made early in the morning, through the upper stockade, as they felt assured that their position was no longer tenable against our force.

Kemundine stockade was about twelve feet high, made of bamboo, erected in a similar manner to the defences at Rangoon. There was a banquette inside, and to the summit of the wall were fastened large logs of wood, suspended merely by small strings, which, being cut, dropped the wood on the assailants. Five pieces of cannon were found there, and many jingals.

To us it was a most important post, as being the spot from whence all the fire-rafts were directed against our ships in the river, which might now be considered secured from any further attempts to injure them by similar means.

From this time may be dated the commencement of the sickness which prevailed to such an alarming

extent in our army; and the subsequent exposure and hard duty upon which the European soldiers were employed, equally contributed to fill the hospitals. The men on guard and picket were constantly wet through, and up to their ancles in water; yet from the absolute necessity of having European sentries, there was no remedy for this evil. Dysentery also began to diminish our effectives in the field, and when salt beef and biscuit were his food exclusively, the man who was once entered upon the sick list under this disease, had but slight hopes of a release from it but by death.

During this month, the detachment which had been sent under Brigadier M'Creagh, to capture Cheduba, returned. The Burmahs had offered opposition, and erected a stockade, in which they had placed all the women and children, whom they prepared to defend. It therefore became necessary to make a breach, and a number of shells were thrown, which made dreadful havoc among the poor helpless wretches inside. The breach being judged practicable, the troops moved forward to the assault, and carried the works with the loss of thirty men.

The Burman commander fell sword in hand on the breach, and the Musghi * was taken prisoner, and with his wife and children sent to Calcutta. It was hoped that Cheduba would prove a useful acquisition as a source of supplies for the army, and the fortieth regiment Bengal infantry was left there in garrison; but we found afterwards that, with the exception of

* Municipal authority.

a few buffaloes, little advantage could be derived from it.

For three weeks subsequent to the capture of Kemundine, we saw nothing of the enemy, but it was ascertained that Sykia Woonghee *, who had been assembling an army in the vicinity of Rangoon, had been superseded by the Court of Ava for his inertness in not having already "driven the English into the sea," and that Shumbah Woonghee had been appointed to succeed him, and was daily expected; it was, however, supposed that the ex-general would try to anticipate him by attacking us.

Although we occasionally received correct information, yet we generally found that more insight was thrown on the movements of the enemy by means of reconnoitring parties, than by the spies; and therefore, in order to ascertain what position the Burmahs had taken up, and whether they were in force, two detachments from the thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments, under Majors Dennie and Frith, were directed, on the 1st of July, to explore the jungle in front of the Dagon.

Scarcely had they entered the wood when a shout arose in every direction, proceeding evidently from a very large body of men, and at the same moment Major Frith's troops commenced firing. A column of three thousand of the enemy now advanced from the jungle into the plain, directing their march on Puzendoon, where we had a post; another body moved towards our lines, and began skirmishing with

* The Woonghees are the highest dignitaries in the empire.

a Sepoy picket; and a large force was also seen moving to the right. This was evidently meant as an attack on our position, but it would seem that their courage failed them at the moment for action, as they contented themselves with burning a few houses at Puzendoon. Finding the enemy so very contemptible, Sir Archibald Campbell merely directed two companies of native infantry to drive the intruders away from the picket, a service which they performed in good style, and without loss. Sykia Woonghee, who made this ridiculous display, resigned his power to Shumbah Woonghee two days after, and retired with his followers to the vicinity of Pegue, justly apprehensive that, if he returned to Ava, he would encounter that fate which, under most oriental governments, generally awaits the unsuccessful general, equally with him who has conducted himself disgracefully before the enemy.

At this period the main Burman army, commanded by the Mengee Maha Bundoolah, was still in Arracan, where our troops, under Captain Noton, had been overpowered by a great superiority of numbers*. This force was composed of well-armed and experienced soldiers, who had been some time embodied, whereas those opposed to us were fresh levies from the district south of Prome; such as Shoedoung, Padoong, Meahoun, Denobiu, and Henzadah, and had been collected in a hurry, to drive us off.

In Ava, in time of war, the services of every sub-

* 17th May.

ject are at the disposal of the sovereign, and the levies are raised in proportion to the population of the district.

The chiefs of the different towns are held responsible for the fidelity of their followers, under pain of death; and they, on their side, secure the allegiance of their dependants, by seizing their wives and children as guarantees for their good conduct.

These conscripts are directed to proceed to the general rendezvous, where they are in some measure organised. At least they receive arms and ammunition, both of the very worst description: many indeed have only the spear, and dah or sword, weapons with which every peasant is provided; and, although the conclusion might be drawn from this circumstance, that in their mode of fighting they would always come in close contact with their adversaries, very few instances occurred during the war, in which they attempted to defend themselves sword in hand.

The Burmahs aim with great precision, and are capital marksmen; but want of discipline prevents their fire being sufficiently rapid to do much injury, and they seldom had time to fire more than a couple of vollies upon our troops, when advancing to storm a stockade. The artillery is still worse, not as regards the quality of its guns, for I have seen some excellent pieces in their possession, but from the manner in which the carriages are made, and from the total want of science evinced in the management of them.

When we entered the Empire, we were led to

suppose that the Burmahs were totally destitute of cannon, but to our astonishment it subsequently appeared that it was an arm which they possessed in abundance.

Their guns were principally iron, and of European manufacture, from three-pounders upwards; some of brass, cast at Ava, were prettily ornamented, but clumsy, and with large touch-holes. The carriages are like those used in ships; some have trails, and very low wheels; the guns are lashed to them with ropes, and I sometimes even have seen the breech fastened to the trail, so as to render it impossible either to raise or depress it. The balls are made of beaten iron, and are consequently very roughly shaped, but they often provided themselves with English balls.

A Burman soldier's dress, though plain, is far from unbecoming. A black glazed jacket forms the principal vesture. A silk wrapper is tied round his loins, leaving the limbs bare. Over the shoulder is thrown a silk scarf, and the hair, tied in a knot on the top of the head, is encircled by a red fillet. A sword slung over the arm, the spear, musket, powder-horn, and shot-pouch, finish his equipment.

On the 5th July, a small stockade was captured within half a mile from the Pagoda, where the thirteenth light infantry lost several men and an officer wounded; and scarcely a day passed without some little skirmishing with the pickets, which we were obliged to make very numerous and strong.

The Burmahs used to approach, on dark nights,

on their hands and knees, and often crawl close up to the sentinels, before they were discovered; sometimes they carried off knapsacks and arms, and went away with their booty unperceived.

A laughable instance of their dexterity took place in the Great Pagoda, on the night of the 2nd July. The soldiers, for several nights previous, had missed some arms, although a sentry was before the door, and they generally slept with their firelocks by their side. This evening, every one was on the alert, extra sentries were posted, and every precaution taken to secure the marauders. When, on a sudden, the alarm being given, the officer on duty, who was reposing in one of the little temples, ran to the door and inquired what had occurred,—but hearing that only a knapsack had been found in the grass, and that no other traces existed of the depredators, he turned round to lie down again, and, to his infinite astonishment, found his bed had vanished! A light was in the room, and a servant sleeping near it, yet, notwithstanding, the impudent thieves had also ransacked a basket, and escaped with the contents. We since heard that the robbers were Burman soldiers belonging to the camp at Kumaroot, whither they carried their spoils. They certainly deserved infinite credit for the ingenuity they manifested, and for the manner in which they turned the laugh against us, by showing that the very moment they chose for their depredations, was one when a strict search was making after them.

The small detachment we had posted at Maindhu

in Dalla, was exposed to constant annoyance, and on the 2nd or 3rd, at night, the alarm being given, Captain Isaacs, who commanded there, rushed out with a few Sepoys, and repelled the attack; but his ardour leading him on too far, and beyond the chance of succour from his troops, he was shot, and fell, when the Burmahs obtaining possession of his body for a few moments, covered him with spear wounds. The Sepoys, however, came up immediately after, and secured the corpse of their commander, at the same time driving the enemy off. Until this time the town of Maindhu had been left standing, in hopes that the inhabitants would return and resume their habitations; but now finding that the houses only favoured the approach of parties of attack, and exposed the sentries to the designs of an invisible assailant, the General directed it to be burned.

The advanced posts of the army under Shumbah Woonghee, had now appeared on the banks of the Rangoon River; and seven miles from Rangoon, at the confluence of the Lyne and Panlang Rivers, a stockade had been erected, which completely raked the river, whilst two others on the opposite sides of the stream, gave a flank fire, and rendered the position very strong, and to us very annoying, as it prevented our advancing up either river, to gain intelligence of the enemy's movements. The main army was said to be in the vicinity, but it was not known whether intrenched or not.

On the 8th of July, Sir Archibald Campbell determined on capturing these stockades; and sending General Macbean by land, with one thousand Europeans and five hundred Sepoys, in the direction most likely to intercept their retreat, he with the gun-boats and a considerable force, proceeded by water.

There were two roads leading from the Pagoda, in the direction we wished to pursue, one a mere foot-path, the other passable for guns. General Macbean preferred the former, and left his artillery behind. The enemy not expecting us by this path, we marched through the jungle for three miles, without seeing a soul, although, in the wood to our left, voices could be distinctly heard, and also the sound of the axe falling on trees, which they were felling to erect their fortifications; but, after marching this distance, two stockades were descried, a few yards in advance. The General instantly halted, to enable the troops, which were marching in single file, (and consequently occupied a great length of ground) to form column, during which time we could observe small parties of Burmahs armed with musquets, coming from the opposite wood to reinforce the stockades. Firing also was heard to the left, which indicated that Sir Archibald Campbell was engaged; and General Macbean therefore made his dispositions for an attack. Brigadier M'Creagh, with five hundred men from his Majesty's thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments, commanded by Majors Sale and Frith, were formed in a column of subdivisions, and with un-

loaded muskets and fixed bayonets, directed to advance on the work. This movement was effected with so much rapidity, order and regularity, that to be in possession of this stockade, and moving on to attack the next, was the affair of a moment. The second was abandoned on the approach of the column, and we then discovered, in a large plain backed by the jungle, a succession of stockades, amounting, in all, to seven. This did not deter the troops from escalading and capturing a third stockade, and then rushing on to the largest: there the column experienced some loss in consequence of the delay in bringing up the scaling-ladders through the muddy paddy-fields, but when they arrived the work was assaulted at all points. There was another stockade inside the outer one, to which, and to the side opposite us, the Burmahs had retired, leaving the place between perfectly clear: the troops, therefore, entered in crowds, and encircled the work, whilst a small party went into the inner stockade, and drove the enemy outside, where our troops were ready to receive them at the bayonet's point.

The panic that now took place among the Burmahs can scarcely be described; rushing in crowds towards the only gate through which they might escape, they completely choked it up: others then attempted to climb over the walls, but were mowed down by our shot, and those at the gate were falling by dozens. Some became quite desperate, and with their long, dishevelled black hair streaming over their

shoulders, and giving them the most ferocious appearance, seized their swords with both hands, and dashed on the bayonets of the soldiers, where they met with that death which they seemed alternately to fear and despise; whilst others hid themselves in the trenches, full of water, and there lay motionless, feigning to be dead. The carnage was very great, at least five hundred men being slain in the main stockade, and amongst them was Shumbah Woonghee. When the firing first commenced, he had been wounded, and his attendants were carrying him into the jungle amidst a host of fugitives, when he received another shot, which terminated his existence. Many other chieftains of rank also fell: one had attacked a soldier of the thirteenth, and was in the act of cutting him down, when Major Sale came to his assistance, and having felled him to the ground, rescued the soldier from his perilous situation.

In this stockade was a battery of nine small guns, and ranged in a row behind, were the Burman colours. They were made of red silk, swallow-tailed, and having the figure of a Braminy goose in the centre, and when furled, were bound round with green leaves instead of cases. A great many stand of arms were captured and destroyed, and many handsome spears, the shafts headed with chased silver, swords with gold and silver handles and scabbards, silver caps, and even the Tsaloeh or gold chain of nine links, worn by the Woonghee, became

the property of the soldiers. The latter ornament was afterwards sold for six hundred and fifty rupees.

The stockades were of great extent, and occupied by ten or twelve thousand men; but, from the circumstance of there being no abatis in front of the works, did not offer that resistance which might have been expected, and probably would have taken place, had more time been allowed them to finish their defences. Sir Archibald Campbell on the river side, after cannonading the stockades until a breach was practicable, directed the troops to land and storm the Pagoda Point stockade, when the Burmahs instantly fled from the position. A day or two afterwards, a strong detachment was sent out to Kumaroot, to see whether the enemy had reoccupied the works, and returning by the lower road, discovered about half a dozen more stockades across the road, so that had we advanced in that direction on the 8th, we should have experienced more serious opposition.

This action at Kumaroot and Pagoda Point struck a most severe blow to the Burman hope of annihilating us; their loss altogether being estimated at one thousand men, whilst the death of the principal chiefs caused the rest of the army to disperse, and retire to their respective homes, and this with the trifling loss on our side of about fifty men. The old Rayhoon of Rangoon was the only chief who now retained any force, and he, with three thousand men, had taken post at Coghee and Kykloo.

About this time a very singular personage arrived

at Rangoon, who it was hoped would prove of the utmost use to the army. This was a man named Gibson, born at Madras, and son of an Englishman and a native woman. He had passed almost all his life in Ava, and had been frequently employed by the Burman monarch in situations of trust. In the present instance he had been sent to Cochin China, with a considerable suite, for the purpose of cementing the union already existing between the two states, and, if possible, to induce the Cochin Chinese to join in an attack on Siam. He, however, met with a very cold reception, and was returning to Ava, knowing nothing of the war, when his ship was obliged to put into Penang, in distress. From hence he was forwarded to Rangoon, and was considered a valuable acquisition; as, from his knowledge of the people and country, it was supposed he would be of the greatest use to us. From him an extensive map he had compiled of the Burman empire was procured; and, although extremely incorrect, yet, as it gave a great deal of general information, and was, with the exception of Wood's map, the only document of the kind we possessed, it proved of much service. Gibson was a man of extraordinary natural genius, and, although his education had taken place in Ava, he had continued to learn and speak English, Portuguese, a little French, and almost all the Oriental dialects; had read works on ancient history, and possessed a fund of general knowledge which was quite surprising.

The remainder of the month of July passed away

without any interruption from the enemy, or any occurrence of consequence amongst ourselves. The sickness was daily increasing to an alarming extent, and the mortality which took place amongst the European part of the force was most melancholy, and not a single ship had yet arrived with fresh provisions—one of the most effectual remedies for the diseases which were so prevalent, or which at least would check their progress. The rains continued without intermission for weeks together, and there appeared no present prospect of advancing, as no means of transport had been sent from either presidency, and we had given up all thoughts of deriving any from the country. Thus circumstanced, we had not one cheering object to look forward to; and, had it not been for the fine feeling of national pride which characterises a British soldier, whatever privation he may be suffering, in the presence of an enemy, we should have found ourselves very miserable.

CHAPTER IV.

Syriam attacked and captured—The Maha Bundoolah—His Origin—Army under the Kee Woonghee—State of the Court of Ava—Accession of Madu Chen—Conspiracy of the Princes of Prome and Tongho—Their Death—Sir A. Campbell appointed Commissioner—Stockades in the Dalla Creek—Expedition to Tavoy and Mergui—Cruelty of the Burmahs—The "Invulnerables" attack the Pagoda—Attempt to Capture the Kitty—Price of fresh Provisions.

Syriam, on the left bank of the Pegue river, and about five miles from Rangoon, in the middle of the last century, was considered the principal town in this part of the country; and being conveniently situated for commercial purposes, was much resorted to by foreigners, particularly French and English, both of whom had factories established there; but their indecisive and treacherous conduct during the war between the Burmahs and Peguers, drew upon them the hatred of both parties, and was the eventual cause of their losing the footing they had obtained in this country. When, in 1757, Alomprah had finally subverted the monarchy of Pegue, razed the capital to the ground, and laid the foundation of Yangoon, the importance given to the new town, by his presence and protection, soon caused it to absorb the population of the neighbouring towns; and Syriam being so near, and all her commerce attracted to the rising city, soon dwindled into a mere village, in which state we found it.

As a military post, Syriam was of some importance. An old brick fort, built on an elevated spot of ground, commanded the river and landing place; and the area of the Kyk Kyk Pagoda, on a hill two miles inland, afforded another strong hold, whence marauding parties might be sent, to disperse and annoy our navigation of the river, by capturing our small boats when passing to and fro.

The Burmahs, who are very apt in selecting judicious military positions, were not long before they availed themselves of the one which now invited them; and, immediately after our arrival, had occupied Syriam with a small detachment, which was easily forced to retire; but, as the distance from Rangoon did not render it advisable to occupy the fort with a reduced force which could not afterwards be supported, and that we could not spare a large detachment from our lines, we did not garrison it.

The Burmahs, after a short time, again resumed possession of the fort, and improved its means of defence. The walls, which were very high, were scarped and loop-holed; a stockade was thrown up on the weakest face, some guns were mounted, and a bridge, which crossed a ravine in front of the river-face, was destroyed.

Having received intimation of this proceeding, Sir A. Campbell, on the 6th of August, resolved again to expel them; and, taking the forty-first regiment in the flotilla anchored abreast of the fort, and kept up such a heavy fire, that when the troops were

landed they took possession of the fort and pagoda with but little loss. A curious order was found in Syriam, addressed to one of the Burman chieftains from his superior in office, who, after enumerating different bodies of men who were to be placed at his disposal, and the points on which they were directing their march, desired him to seize all the white strangers, in order that they might be effectually exterminated. The thought was certainly not bad, and gives a very good idea of the general opinion they entertained of our progress in civilisation.

It was at this period that we heard of the Mengee Maha Bundoolah* having been directed to leave our eastern frontier and march on Rangoon with his army, for the purpose of annihilating us; the Burman government never doubting but that he, the greatest hero in the empire, who had just covered his brow with fresh laurels, by overpowering the Sepoys at Ramoo, and had with him an army of 17,000 men, would find but little difficulty in effecting our defeat.

This extraordinary man, who since played so conspicuous a part in supporting the honour of his country, was originally in a low situation, and of mean birth, but first brought himself into notice in the army. Naturally clever, and of an enterprising disposition, he soon managed to push himself forward, and was at last appointed to the command of the army intended to invade Cachar.

* Bundoolah is an assumed name, and signifies one who moves with the agility of a monkey; and Mengee and Maha are titles implying greatness.

His success in this capacity brought him into the highest favour at court; and artfully flattering the ambition and thirst for conquest of the king, and being warmly supported by the queen, he obtained a great ascendancy over the mind of his majesty.

When Gibson was sent to Cochin China to demand the assistance of that power in conquering Siam, Bundoolah exhorted the king rather to turn his thoughts of dominion to the west. "Wherefore," said he, "should we not take the provinces of the English, which are much richer, and will prove an easier conquest: I have already defeated their best soldiers—give me but an army, and I will conquer the whole country." Continually urging this object, he at last gained his point, and marched with an army through the Aeng pass to Arracan, where he entered our territory, taking with him a pair of golden fetters to bind the governor-general!

The disastrous affair at Ramoo, though not fought under his immediate eye, was the result of his general directions. He did not follow up his blow, or he might easily have captured Chittagong, there being but a trifling force to oppose him; but troops being immediately sent to the endangered province, the Bundoolah became rather less sanguine in his hopes of capturing Bengal, and the order arriving from the court at this time, directing him to proceed towards Rangoon, he was enabled to quit Arracan with flying colours and an increased reputation.

He did not proceed at once to Rangoon, but

taking post at Denobiu on the Irrawaddy, seventy miles from Rangoon, availed himself of the ruins of an old Tallien fort to strengthen his position, on which he lavished all the skill and talent of the Burman engineers. There he remained organising his army, and waiting till the inundations should subside, and enable him to move down and attack us.

Not confining their views to the grand army under the Maha Bundoolah, the Burmahs were rapidly raising another at Tantabain, twenty-five miles up the Lyne river. The command of this force was given to the Kee Woonghee, who, on taking leave of the king, received from his hands a small punkah, or fan, which his majesty assured him would turn off all the English balls if he only waved it to and fro. At Kykloo and Coghee on the Pegue road, the old Rayhoon of Rangoon, with two thousand men, had established himself, and there kept watch upon the greater part of the inhabitants of Rangoon. Panlang was fortifying, and works were built on the Panlang river in several places. The general superintendence of these operations was intrusted to the Prince of Sarawaddy, brother to the king, who was a man of no talent, and whose only recommendation to the post he held was being one of the blood-royal, a quality which of course would lend weight to his opinions, and importance to his proposals.

Notwithstanding the danger which threatened it, the Court of Ava at this period was a prey to faction

and dissension. The sovereign was a slave to the authority of his queen, and she nearly as much so to the influence of her brother, Prince Menzaghee. These personages had been elevated to their high station from the very lowest class of the people, with no good quality or any distinguished talent to recommend them; but they were versed in the art of intrigue, and by a successful co-operation of their abilities in that respect, had so effectually taken possession of the king's judgment, that no act of his authority could take effect, unless revised and sanctioned by their concurrence in it. In the present case they had resolved to lend their support to the projects of invasion entertained by Bundoolah, a principal member of their cabal, and so confident were they in their anticipation of ultimate success, and so far from harbouring any apprehensions as to what might be the consequence of an unprovoked aggression upon the territories of their powerful British neighbours, that they were not only supposed to have directed Bundoolah to invade Bengal, but to have instructed him to bring the governor-general in fetters to Ummerapoora!

The queen had attained her forty-fourth year; and it may be presumed, therefore, that it was no longer through the medium of any personal charms that she kept a husband younger than herself in subjection. She flattered his passions, and amongst them that of conquest, encouraging his ambition in this last respect, as the most effectual means of preserving her

own favour. Bundoolah and the principal officers of his army were her creatures, and being indebted to her and to her brother for their appointments, they were necessarily bound to support their benefactors to the utmost of their power, when any sudden emergency might render it incumbent upon them to do so: hence, also, it followed, that no communication could reach the king's ears which had not been previously prepared according to the intents and views of this artful woman, and of Prince Menzaghee. When any disaster befel the national army during the course of the present war, it was as industriously concealed or palliated, as was any trifling success magnified into a brilliant victory; and thus it happened that all our attempts to negotiate a peace during the first eighteen months of the war were instantly counteracted and frustrated by the intrigues of the queen's party, under the apprehension that any direct communication which Sir Archibald Campbell might address to the capital, should eventually reach the king, and open his eyes to the deceptions that had been practised towards him. Colonel Symes, in the entertaining historical preface to his work, relates the origin of the present Burman dynasty, and it is therefore unnecessary for me to advert to it. The present king of Ava, Madu Chen, mounted the throne in 1818, on the demise of his grandfather, Minderaghee Prah. He is son of the Engy Tekien, or Prince Royal, of whom Symes speaks, in 1795, and is now forty years of age.

Minderaghee Prah left two sons, the princes of Prome and Tongho; the former a man of a mild and quiet disposition, and whose daughter was married to her cousin the present king. The young prince royal was the fruit of this marriage; and it might be supposed that, bound by these double ties, the Prince of Prome would have been the staunch supporter of his nephew and son-in-law; but his daughter having died previous to the accession of Madu Chen, who then became infatuated with his now royal consort, the Prince of Prome fell off from the allegiance he owed his sovereign, and instigated by his brother the prince of Tongho, whose character was excessively cruel, was induced to lend his sanction to a plot, the object of which was, to dethrone the young king and raise the Prince of Prome to the throne.

This conspiracy was, however, discovered by Madu Chen; who, dissembling his knowledge of the transaction, sent for his brother, the Prince of Sarawaddy, and consulted with him as to the steps he had best pursue. The danger was urgent, as the king's uncles possessed great influence, and delay was dangerous: an unlucky moment might discover that the king was aware of the designs against him, and thus drive the conspirators into open rebellion. Sending, therefore, quietly for the Prince of Tongho to the Lootoo*, where the chieftains of the empire were assembled, he accused him of his crime, and

* Council-chamber.

then ordered his own and the whole of his family's immediate execution.

Spilling the blood of a member of the royal family is contrary to the laws of Ava, and the mode of execution resorted to is, tying the delinquent in a red sack between two jars, and throwing him into the Irrawaddy; when the jars filling, soon sink with their freight. On this occasion the above punishment was put in practice, and the Prince of Tongho, with twelve of his sons and relations, who, whether implicated or not in his crime, were guilty of being his connexions, were consigned to a watery grave, and the title and province of Tongho were conferred on the king's second brother.

A remain of tenderness and respect for his father-in-law, whom he had always much esteemed, induced the king to treat the Prince of Prome with more lenity, and he merely ordered him to be confined in prison, whence it was supposed he would be eventually released; but retribution awaited the old man for his treachery, and he was strangled in his cell during the night. It was given out that he had died suddenly, but there was little doubt of the manner of his death, which was attributed to the queen and her myrmidons, who feared that, had he been restored to favour, his influence would have counteracted that of her majesty.

After this sanguinary scene quiet was restored to the court, and the remainder of the king's reign has not been marked by many acts of cruelty emanating

from himself. He is said to be of a mild and benevolent disposition, but weak mind, and easily governed.

In despotic governments like this, where unlimited power is vested in the sovereign, and he is difficult of access, his favourites become the only medium of communication between him and his people;—they are the channels through which all benefits flow, and whence punishments proceed; and to them naturally all requests or supplications are made, which are granted or not according to the wealth and consideration of the petitioners. Courts of this description must be the seats of anarchy and confusion,—the prey of two or three individuals or cabals whose interests are constantly jarring, and who disagree in every point except that of keeping the sovereign in perfect ignorance of everything going forward, and only allowing him to take a deceptive look at his affairs as seen through their corrupted medium.

The consequences of such dissensions are obvious. Whichever party for the moment obtains the ascendency, acts in contradiction to the measures of its predecessors, and cancels all those arrangements which were made but a short time before. Another faction succeeds and pursues the same system; and thus changes follow each other so rapidly, that no reliance can be placed upon the decisions of the ephemeral authority of the time being. Governors appointed to the command of districts find themselves superseded before they reach them; orders issued one

day are revoked the next, and lives and property are sported with as being of no value. In councils thus devoid of unanimity and mutual interest, no solidity can exist; each individual considering his own affairs of more importance than those of the nation. Thus when, by any unforeseen circumstance, their assistance is called for, and their abilities brought into play, discord reigns in their debates,—their orders are either the offspring of pusillanimity or of rashness, and any suggestions dictated by the good sense and integrity of men of talent are disregarded. This was the actual state of the court of Ava; and it was evident that the period was not far distant when a fabric composed of such disjointed materials would fall to the ground.

Sir A. Campbell had now been appointed by Government sole commissioner for the affairs of Ava, Major Canning having returned to Calcutta in very bad health, and soon after died. No opportunity, however, was afforded for the exercise of his diplomatic functions, for we now witnessed what had never before occurred in the East—a nation seeing us, for four or five months, in possession of their principal seaport town, and not opening the slightest communication, but, on the contrary, studiously avoiding any intercourse with us; and thus it followed that we had hitherto gained scarcely more knowledge of the Burmahs than if we had never entered the country. There were not two hundred native inhabitants in Rangoon, and those

were attendants on the merchants and residents. At length, on the 7th of August, we had a transient hope that at last the population were coming in.

Some Burmahs came over from Dalla, and stated that, in a village situated about twenty miles up the Dalla creek, two parties had been formed among the inhabitants, one of which was friendly, and wished to join us, but was kept under by the other. They therefore requested that we would send a force to emancipate them; assuring us at the same time we should meet with no opposition, as there were no Burman troops on that side. This was all very plausible, and as it would have been a point of the utmost importance gained, to have opened a friendly intercourse with any of the inhabitants, these apparent overtures were received with much pleasure. We ran headlong into the trap; and, that no time might be lost, two hundred of the Madras European regiment, and as many Sepoys, were directed to embark next day in the row-boats, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Hastings Kelly.

The Dalla creek is one of those small streams which intersect the lower part of Pegue, and is said to communicate with the main stream of the Irrawaddy. It unites with the Rangoon river opposite that town, and is there not more than forty yards wide, and being open to the force of the stream, the tide rushes up it with great rapidity; the banks are muddy, and on their summit grows an impenetrable

jungle of low thick trees and bushes. At the turn of tide, on the morning of the 8th, the detachment entered this stream, and after winding through its numerous reaches for two miles, at a sharp turn discovered a stockade three hundred yards distant.

We were evidently led into an ambuscade; the boats were instantly collected, and, when all were assembled, directed to advance. Unfortunately, the boat Lascars, who as yet were not accustomed to an enemy's fire, hung back the moment their guns opened, and delayed us so long, that the Burmahs were enabled to get the range of our two leading boats manned by the navy with grape, which did no little execution. The tide, however, carried them on, and a landing was effected under a small bank of earth within twenty yards of the stockade. The mud was so deep that all those who got on shore were up to their knees, and in some places up to their middle, in water; and, to render matters still more serious, a stockade, not forty yards distant, hitherto masked by the jungle, opened a sharp fire, which, before we could escalade the work, had increased our loss to three officers and fifty men killed and wounded. On entering the stockade, one wounded Burmah was found! Thus ended our journey intended to settle disputes: for Colonel Kelly, judging that the information must all be equally bad, returned to the lines.

As it was now impracticable for the army to make

a forward movement before the month of January, Sir A. Campbell resolved to employ the intermediate time in attacking the maritime possessions of his enemy. Tavoy and Mergui were the principal of these, and within our more immediate reach, and were also points from whence we might communicate with the Siamese, who, from their inveterate hatred to the Burmahs, it was supposed would be induced to join us, and thus divide the attention of our common enemy, the Burman government. A force consisting of his Majesty's eighty-ninth regiment, and the eighth regiment of the Madras Native Infantry, was accordingly placed under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Miles of the former corps, for the purpose of capturing those towns.

The provinces of Tavoy and Mergui, on the coast of Tenasserim, were, as well as the town of Tenasserim itself, ceded to the Burmahs in 1793, at the conclusion of a long and obstinate war, in which the Burmahs succeeded in possessing themselves of those districts. The inhabitants submitted quietly to the rule of the Burman governors, supported by a competent force, and in course of time became perfectly amalgamated with their conquerors. The strip of land forming these provinces occupies half the Peninsula of Malaya in breadth, and is bounded by Siam on the east and Malaya on the south.

The whole western coast of the Bay of Bengal being under the control of the British, it became desirable that her commerce should be secured from

the depredations of the privateers who infested the Indian seas during the last war, and whose places of refuge, and harbours whence they used to derive refreshments, were generally concluded to be, with Rangoon, the best seaports of continental India situated to the eastward of the Ganges. In the event, therefore, of circumstances rendering it expedient for us to extend our possessions in that direction, Mergui and Tavoy might be considered as most valuable acquisitions; whilst, on the other hand, we hoped, as far as related to our present wants, that we should, within a few weeks, receive abundant supplies of cattle and other provisions from the same quarter.

Notwithstanding the warlike preparations of the enemy in front of Rangoon, no offensive operations took place for some time, but the pickets were constantly kept on the alert by parties of Burmahs, who hovered around us in every direction to observe our movements, and occasionally captured or murdered any unfortunate stragglers who happened to fall in their way. A small boat belonging to the General Wood was taken by one of these parties, and with it the gunner of the vessel. A few days afterwards his corpse was seen floating down the river in a dreadfully mutilated state. The head had been severed from the body, the feet were perforated by nails, his legs bore the marks of pieces of flesh having been forcibly torn from them, and his backbone had been sawed in two. This and other in-

stances of cruelty on the part of the Burmahs towards their prisoners created a general supposition that every person who fell into their hands would be executed; but fortunately savage conduct of this description was subsequently put a stop to.

Information which about this period reached the General, induced him to believe that an attack would be made on our lines on the 27th day of the moon, —a day which had been predicted to the Burman chiefs as propitious; and, in order to be the better prepared for such an event, the jungle was cleared away in front of our lines; guns were mounted in the great Pagoda, and at other commanding posts, and two strong positions between the lines and the village of Puzendoon were occupied, thereby effectually protecting the more assailable parts of the stockade at Rangoon. These precautions, as it turned out, were very necessary; for, at the end of the month of August, a man was seized by our pickets, and on examination was discovered to be one of the enemy's celebrated corps of Invulnerables. He described these as a select band of three hundred men who had sworn to rescue the Shoe-Dagon from the hands of the Colars (strangers), or to perish in the attempt; that he had himself been sent into our camp, in order to report upon the defences of it, but that when he had observed our great guns, and remarked our position to be well filled with soldiers, his heart had failed him, and he deemed it a more prudent

plan to remain with us altogether than to return to his own countrymen.

These Invulnerables are supposed to be rendered quite secure from personal danger, by enchantments and incantations. One of their magic charms consists in preparing small pieces of gold, of the size and shape of a silver penny, on which certain mystical characters are engraved, and inserting them into small incisions made in the upper part of the arm; and when the skin has closed upon them, the charm is effected. Others again have mystical emblems tattooed with red on their arms and breast. But the supposed efficacy of any of these precautions must have been soon called into question by the Burmahs themselves, as we used to find many of their soldiers, marked in the manner which I have here described, lying amongst the dead after our engagements.

On the night of the 28th of August the approach of the corps of Invulnerables was announced to us by a few shots fired by our advanced sentries, and succeeded by a tremendous yell on the part of the Burmahs, who, rushing in between the great Pagoda and our outlying picket (which, on the first alarm, had fallen back as previously directed), succeeded in penetrating to the foot of the steps leading to the Dagon. But here they were received by a picket consisting of an officer and fifty men of the thirty-eighth regiment, who kept them in check until two rounds of grape were fired from the pagoda guns,

when they instantly disappeared. Not a shout, nor the sound of a single voice could be heard when they retired, so rapidly, yet cautiously, did they effect their retreat, after losing about twenty men. A picket of one hundred Sepoys was likewise attacked, and while the men were drawn up to receive the Burmahs in front, some of these latter contrived to creep to the rear, and enter the house which the picket occupied, from whence they carried off the Sepoys' knapsacks!

Since the 8th of August the Burmahs had reoccupied the stockades constructed on the Dalla creek, but were expelled from them by a detachment of the twenty-second Madras Native Infantry, commanded by Major Lacy Evans, who, making use of his artillery, captured the work without sustaining any loss. Much importance being attached to this post by the Burmahs, as it would enable them to issue from it unobserved and to capture our small river-craft, as also to annoy the detachment we had posted in the town of Dalla, a small party of Sepoys was left to garrison it until the work itself could be effectually destroyed, and two gun-boats were stationed within the creek. On the night of the 6th of September a heavy firing was heard in this direction, and the next morning we ascertained that the Burmahs, having made a desperate attempt to capture the Kitty (the leading gun-boat,) were gallantly beat off by Mr. Crawford, the commander. They had absolutely boarded the brig, and were so far in possession of her, that it was only upon Mr. Crawford and his crew,

aided by three or four Sepoys, concentrating themselves upon the forecastle, from whence they were enabled to fire a swivel upon the assailants, that the deck was cleared, and the Burmahs compelled to throw themselves overboard. Captain Marryat, with the boats of his Majesty's ship Larne, went to the assistance of the brig, and arrived in time to sink three of the enemy's boats, and to capture five others. A land attack had been simultaneously made on the stockade, but was likewise repulsed.

In order to ascertain whether a force of any consequence was stationed up the Dalla creek, a reconnoitring party, under the command of Captain Piper, of his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, proceeded by water for several miles in that direction, but was obliged to return next day, the creek becoming so narrow and shallow, that it was no longer navigable for row-boats.

The number of our sick did not diminish during the months of September and October, as the scarcity of fresh provisions still continued; for, although a number of buffaloes were occasionally brought in by our foraging parties, sufficient for the supply of the hospitals, the condition of the rest of the troops was not ameliorated. The few articles of food which could be purchased on board the ships, sold at a most extravagant price, and even then were not always procurable. Fowls, eight rupees a-piece *, ducks, the same, a goose sixteen †, and a half-starved sheep, which in Calcutta would cost two rupees, sold for

* 1*l*. † 2*l*.

thirty. A cow and a calf at an auction on board a ship were put up for sale at three hundred rupees! Fish, in very small quantities, were sometimes to be had, but even these became rare in consequence of the Burmahs having captured some of the fishing-boats. We occasionally procured a little fruit from the adjacent jungle, but as some risk attended those who ventured beyond the sentries, this supply became very precarious, and the fine oranges, citrons, limes, plantains and guavas, which were now coming into season, much to our regret, were left to decay upon the trees. Dried fish, salt pork and beef, bad biscuit, and rice, constituted our daily food for five months; a diet which, as it may be easily imagined, was not much to the taste of those who were accustomed to fare of a much better description; but this was *la fortune de la guerre*, and we were obliged to content ourselves with it.

The Indian government was now organizing another army of ten thousand men at Chittagong, under Brigadier-general Morrison: it was to take the field with every possible convenience, for the transport of stores and camp-equipage, and, after capturing Arracan, was intended to invade Ava through the mountains which separate that country from the Irrawaddy districts, and then march on the capital. Brigadier-general Shuldam, with five thousand men, was instructed to penetrate to Munnipoor, by a corresponding operation; and a force under Lieutenant-colonel Richards, through Assam. Meanwhile, the

Burman chieftains had not been unmindful of their own interests. The Kee Woonghee with his army had erected a succession of strong stockades on the Lyne River, and, according to the Burman mode of warfare, was gradually pushing his works nearer to Rangoon. The force at Kykloo and Coghee had also approached, and it became evident, that as the Burmahs did not appear inclined to attack us, we should be obliged to move out and attack them ; but as the country was still partially inundated, the General did not deem it advisable to expose the men to the damp, except on urgent occasions, and more active measures were, therefore, deferred for some time longer.

At the end of September, hopes were entertained that the rains would cease, or, at least, become less frequent ; but, for many days beyond the usual period of their termination, scarcely any change took place. The mornings were regularly ushered in by fogs, which lasted until nine o'clock ; when, if any suspension of the rain did occur, it was attended with pestiferous exhalations from the swamps around us ; these are occasioned by the excessive heat which prevailed at this season, and unfortunately the baneful effects of it were but too perceptible amongst our troops, from the increased mortality, and the extraordinary augmentation of our sick list.

CHAPTER V.

Column under Colonel Smith, sent to Kykloo—Skirmish at Tadaghee—Attack on Kykloo—The troops are repulsed, and retreat—Brigadier M'Creagh sent to attack the Stockade—Shocking instance of Burman cruelty—Bivouac—Kykloo evacuated—Advance to Coghee—Tantabain taken—Colonel Godwin captures Martaban—Fall of Tavoy and Mergui—Expedition to Pegue, 27th November—Obo—Arrive at Pegue—The Shoemadoo—Fortifications of Pegue—Adjacent country—Leave Pegue.

On the 4th October, Major Thomas Evans, with three hundred men of his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, received instructions to embark on board the flotilla, accompanied by the steam-vessel, and the Satellite (eighteen guns,) Lieutenant Dobson, and to sail up the Lyne River, for the purpose of dislodging that part of the Kee Woonghee's army which was intrenched on its banks; and the light brigade, consisting of the third and thirty-fourth regiments, Madras Native Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Smith, were directed to advance on the Pegue road, and, by attracting the attention of the Burmahs, prevent their concentrating their forces on one point. The light brigade was considered one of the best in the Madras army. The men were well dressed, well disciplined, and, what was of far more importance, they were well officered. The column was eight hundred strong, and accompanied by two howitzers. We started at day-break, and on arriving at the site of the village of Kokien, two

miles from Rangoon, observed, with no small degree of surprise, an immense stockade at the opposite end of the plain, capable of containing several thousand men, and which had been constructed without our knowledge; it was no doubt intended for the reception of part of Shumbah Woonghee's army, as there were no traces of its having been previously occupied. Through this we marched, and passing Joazong, halted near the village of Carenzie, in order to rest the men. To our front ran a deep ravine, influenced by the tide, and only passable by means of planks thrown over the remains of a bridge; a thick jungle was on the left, and the Moreic river ran on the right. The head of the column had scarcely cleared the bridge, when it was fired on, and advancing a little further, a stockade appeared at about three hundred yards distance, resting on the jungle, and enfilading the road. Here a slight check occurred, and a very gallant young officer of pioneers, Lieutenant Campbell, was mortally wounded when moving forward; but Colonel Smith judiciously detached a company on his flank through the jungle, and as the work was in an unfinished state in that quarter, the Burmahs immediately evacuated it, and we took up our quarters in the stockades, which were built on the site of the ruined village of Tadaghee. A prisoner who was brought in a short time afterwards by one of our followers, informed us, that the Chuddah Woon, and Rayhoon of Rangoon, with three thousand men, some cavalry, and ele-

phants, and nine guns, had taken post at Kykloo, five miles in advance, where they had fortified a pagoda, and erected stockades. This intelligence induced Colonel Smith to write to Sir A. Campbell, requesting a reinforcement; and three hundred more of the Madras Native Infantry, and two additional howitzers, were accordingly ordered to join us.

On the arrival of this detachment, which now increased our numbers to eleven hundred, Colonel Smith divided the force into three divisions, and allotting to each a point of attack, he commenced his march at two o'clock in the afternoon.

An extensive plain lay to the right of the road, and on the left, a thick and almost impervious jungle afforded fine cover for skirmishers; and of this we soon found the Burmahs knew how to avail themselves; for at about a quarter of a mile in advance, several horsemen made their appearance, and after galloping about in front of us for some time, apparently reconnoitring, disappeared behind a strip of jungle. The head of the column no sooner passed this spot, than it received a volley of musketry, from a masked breastwork, which wounded a number of men; and on advancing a little farther, another was in like manner fired with equal effect; but from this place, until we came in sight of the Tee of the Kykloo Pagoda, our march was not again molested. The Pagoda is built upon the summit of an elevated ground to the left of the road, which leads through a thick gloomy forest, and our troops ascended this hill,

until they reached a small open space within one hundred and fifty yards of the pagoda, where they were enabled to form up out of the range of a heavy gun, by which the road was enfiladed.

It was now ascertained that the principal stockade was situated in a small plain two hundred yards to our right, and that the approach to it, leading from where we were, was completely commanded by the enemy's works: these we should have believed to have been evacuated, not a sound being heard, nor a man visible, did not some smoke, issuing from the interior of them, assure us that they were still occupied.

Colonel Smith, wishing, if possible, to make an attack on the flank and rear of the stockade, sent Captain Williamson, with one division, through the wood for that purpose, and directed Major Wahab, with four hundred men of the thirty-fourth light infantry, to advance with two scaling ladders, and to escalade it, giving orders, at the same time, to a company of the twenty-eighth Madras Native Infantry, to attack the pagoda. The storming column moved off at double-quick time, with the officers leading, and advanced without opposition to within one hundred yards of the stockade; but here the enemy commenced his fire, and succeeded in checking the further advance of the Sepoys, notwithstanding the most spirited exertions of their officers *.

Major Wahab and the officers, who were gallantly

* See Colonel Smith's Report.

conducting the pioneers with the scaling ladders, having advanced considerably in front of the column, were all nearly killed, or wounded; the major, himself, being included amongst the latter number. The Burmahs, after the first two or three vollies, had slackened their fire, but on observing what was passing on our side, resumed it with redoubled effect; whilst those stationed in the pagoda bringing their guns to bear, a cross-fire was opened upon our troops, which occasioned as much mischief. Colonel Smith, finding that his efforts to make the men advance were unsuccessful, and that by remaining in this paralysed state, we only increased our loss, ordered the retreat to be sounded. Captain Williamson joined us soon after; and as he had found it impracticable to pass through the woods, his troops were comparatively fresh, and he, therefore, was directed to cover the retreat, which we effected during the following night with some degree of order. Two officers* and forty men were left dead on the field, and four officers and sixty men were wounded; several stand of arms were lost, and what little baggage the officers had taken with them, likewise became the spoil of the enemy. Before we had marched far, we heard repeated shots from the stockade, which, as it subsequently appeared, were fired in the belief that we had not retired; indeed, at one time, the Burmahs were absolutely evacuating the stockade, and had only left

* Captain Allen and Lieutenant Bond, of the thirty-fourth Madras light infantry.

a few men to line the front face, but the Chuddah Woon, observing that the English were not advancing rallied his troops, and returned to the scene of action.

The failure of this affair must be attributed exclusively to the unusual panic which had seized the Sepoys, as the arrangements made by Colonel Smith were perfectly calculated to ensure success, had they been as well executed as they were planned. Even when the case became nearly hopeless, no exertion or individual gallantry was wanting either on his part, or on that of the officers under his command, to remedy it, by attempting an assault upon the enemy's entrenchment. The Burmahs immediately sent a courier to Ava, with the intelligence that the British had been defeated with the loss of one thousand men, several stand of arms, and much baggage; and the firelocks, accoutrements, and coats of the Sepoys who were killed, being sent to corroborate this statement, it was announced to the metropolis by a salute of artillery; several titles were then conferred on the Chuddah Woon, and proportionable rewards to his officers.

On our return to Rangoon, immediate steps were taken by the Commander of the forces to counteract the effect of this ill success, and Brigadier M'Creagh, with one thousand men, moved out on the ensuing day. The troops marched all night, and after resting a short time at Tadaghee, we proceeded through the plain to the breastworks in its vicinity, which we found deserted. As it was already late in

the day, the Brigadier did not think it advisable to push on as far as Kykloo, but determined on halting in the plain about a mile from the stockade.

When at a short distance from the destined spot of encampment, we observed an immense number of vultures, adjutants, and other birds of prey, hovering in the air, and apparently disturbed by our approach, from a banquet which it was supposed might be offered by the carcase of a buffalo, but, to our horror, we were soon undeceived, and one of the most disgusting instances of barbarity offered itself to our view that could possibly be conceived. The first object that struck us, was a small gibbet six feet high, erected at a very short distance from the road, and to which was suspended a human body, with the arms and legs extended, and swollen to an enormous size, from the effects of putrefaction. A little farther on was another, bound to the trunk of a tree, and embowelled; from a third, the head had been severed and fastened between the shoulders; others were hanging to trees, with the heels uppermost, and some were mutilated in a manner too dreadful for description. Occasionally the tattered remnants of a uniform jacket still adhered to the bodies, and convinced us that the twenty-seven corpses which we counted, were those of the unfortunate Sepoys who fell at Kykloo; and although so fast falling to decay, that the features and colour of the bodies were no longer distinguishable, it was generally supposed that the remains of Captain Allen

and Lieutenant Bond were among the number, two corpses having been seen with shoes on the feet.

This horrible array, through which we were obliged to march, had quite a different effect on the troops than that the Burmahs had expected—not a word was uttered while we passed, save an unanimous declaration of revenge from the European troops, who, in a low tone, denounced extermination against every Burmah they should meet. At about a mile beyond this, we halted, and forming the troops in a square, lay down for the night, in the hopes of obtaining some rest, a boon which the musquitoes denied us; and a circumstance which occurred soon after, still more effectually disturbed the repose of the bivouac.

The night was very dark, and objects were just distinguishable by the gloomy light thrown by the numerous fires intended to drive away the musquitoes, and round which soldiers and officers lay in promiscuous groups, ready to start up at the slightest alarm. All, however, was perfectly still, till the middle of the night, when a terrific yell arose, which was re-echoed throughout the bivouac, and in an instant caused the drowsy soldiers to seize their arms, and, fixing their bayonets, prepare for an attack from the enemy. The uproar still continued, and was succeeded by the trampling of horses, when all was again silent; and, to the astonishment of every one, not a shot had been fired by the pickets. Another sound of horses was again heard, when in dashed a

number of our ponies, which had broken loose during the night, and whilst wandering about, had trodden on one of the camp-followers. No sooner did the man feel this unusual burden, than his imagination converted it into the attack of a Burmah, and squatting on the ground, he commenced a long and continued howl, which was instantly repeated by his sable brethren, and gave rise to this ridiculous alarm. Sleep after this was out of the question; we therefore marched soon afterwards, and arrived at the scene of our late repulse, when, on reconnoitring both stockades, we found them evacuated.

On questioning some old women who remained in the village of Kykloo, it was ascertained that the enemy had retired to Coghee, six miles farther on, and thither Brigadier M'Creagh resolved on marching. The road now left the plain, and ran through a romantic jungle, or rather forest, over a succession of hills and vallies, and occasionally passing a deep and gloomy glade; it was but just wide enough for our artillery, and could therefore be easily defended by breastworks, four or five of which had been judiciously thrown up, but abandoned. Trees had been also felled at every step, to retard our progress, but, through the exertions of the pioneers, were easily removed; whilst every now and then the still burning embers, and broken jars of rice, indicated where pickets had been stationed, and at about six o'clock a mass of smoke, rising above the jungle, pointed out to us the situation of Coghee.

It was now considered certain that we should have an opportunity of inflicting a wholesome chastisement on our barbarous enemy, but here we were again disappointed. The stockade was empty, and the smoke proceeded from the houses in the interior which had been burned to the ground. The town of Coghee, a mile farther on, had shared the same fate; it was more than a mile in extent, and presented a complete picture of desolation—not a living creature was to be seen, except two or three old women, in the last stage of existence, who were apparently unconscious of the change which had taken place in their residence, and yet this town, a short time before, must have contained several thousand inhabitants. Deeming it useless to pursue them any farther, being now twenty miles from Rangoon, we returned the same evening to Kykloo, after finding at Coghee the crucified bodies of six more Sepoys.

On arriving at Rangoon on the 13th, we heard that the column, under Major T. Evans, had been completely successful, having attacked and successively carried the whole of the enemy's works on the Lyne river, as high up as the Tantabain, where the Kee Woonghee had built a capital house, and strong stockade, with the intention of making it his residence. The troops suffered no loss, and returned to the lines with the satisfaction of knowing that, for the present, the vicinity of Rangoon was clear of the enemy.

It was supposed that, ere this, Tavoy and Mergui must have fallen into our hands; and as Martaban and Yeh were the only remaining towns of consequence on that coast still in the possession of the Burmahs, and it being reported that some dissensions existed among the inhabitants, Sir A. Campbell deemed this a favourable opportunity of making an attack upon them, and, for that purpose, placed one hundred men of the forty-first regiment, and three hundred of the third light infantry, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Goodwin, of his Majesty's forty-first regiment.

Martaban, situated in the corner of the bay formed by Pegue and Tenasserim, is built on the west bank of the Thalueyn river, and is the capital of a large province of the same name, which once formed part of the Siamese territory. During the wars between the Burmahs and Siamese, Martaban, as a frontier town, was constantly passing from the dominion of one to the other, and it was only at the end of the last century that the Burmahs obtained final possession of the province. From that period it has been governed by a Maywoon, totally independent of the Maywoon of Henzawuddy, and is considered one of the finest provinces in the empire. Yeh is a small district and town of Tenasserim, of but little importance.

The expedition sailed on the 12th, expecting to arrive there in a couple of days, as the distance was only ninety miles; but more than a month elapsed

before any tidings were received from them, and during that interval much anxiety was felt on their account: we at length heard that the ships, having missed the entrance of the river, were delayed seventeen days before they anchored off Martaban, where the garrison making a considerable show of resistance, the town was bombarded for some time, and the troops were then landed and directed to storm. The assault was very dashingly conducted, and proved successful, with the loss of only thirty men.

Eighty jingals, six pieces of cannon, several hundred stand of arms, and a quantity of ammunition, became the prize of the assailants; who further had the satisfaction, two or three days afterwards, of seeing the whole population of the town returning to their houses, and placing themselves under the protection of the British. They also delivered up three elephants, and in a short time appeared perfectly reconciled to their change of masters. Yeh fell without resistance; and the third Madras light infantry being left in garrison at Martaban, his Majesty's forty-first regiment returned to Rangoon.

Intelligence was now also received of Colonel Miles's proceedings. On arriving at Tavoy, some communication passed between him and the Rayhoon, from whom he received a message, stating that he was favourably inclined towards the English, and would willingly surrender the town; but that the Maywoon was determined on resistance: if,

however, the Colonel agreed to the proposition, he promised to seize the Governor, and deliver him and the town into our possession. This plan was of course acceded to; and the Rayhoon instantly carried it into effect, by surrounding the Maywoon's house, and taking him prisoner. The detachment was received at Tavoy with open arms, and remained there a few days to settle the district; when, leaving a portion of the Sepoys in garrison, they proceeded to Mergui. That town was well fortified and provided with artillery; but his Majesty's eighty-ninth regiment, rushing forward to the assault, soon put the garrison to flight, and made the Maywoon prisoner.

The inhabitants of Mergui followed the example of those at Tavoy, and before long the detachment was supplied with fruit, fresh meat, and vegetables. This rendered our new acquisition of great importance, as far as related to the victualling of the army, which might now be provided with plenty of buffaloes. The moment, therefore, Sir A. Campbell received intelligence of the fall of Mergui, he despatched transports both to that town and to Tavoy, for the purpose of bringing cattle for the troops, and at the same time ordered his Majesty's eighty-ninth regiment to return immediately.

The climate of Mergui was represented as being so very salubrious, that it was judged, by the medical men, to be a proper situation for the invalids of the army, the number of whom was increasing to an

alarming extent, and steps were consequently taken to send them there, a measure which eventually proved very beneficial. The sickness at Rangoon still continued; but, for some time past, we had received supplies of fresh beef for the hospitals, and occasionally for the rest of the army. These had been procured by our foraging parties, and also from Chedubah and the Presidencies, and it was hoped would contribute to check the progress of disease, which had now carried off nearly one thousand two hundred European soldiers.

During the month of November, we heard constant rumours that the grand Burman army was moving down to attack us, but nothing certain could be elicited, except that the Maha Bundoolah had raised a very numerous force at Denobiu, well appointed with cannon and military stores, and that he was merely waiting for fine weather to commence hostilities.

We, on our side, were not idle; and reduced as the force was by sickness, death, and the strong detachments now absent, it was found that, in order to render our extensive position tenable, a little assistance would be required from art: the trees and jungle were felled, therefore, on the Kemundine side, so as to offer an open space for the range of our artillery; batteries were erected in judicious positions, and the intervals between the stations allotted to the troops were defended with an abatis; guns and mortars were mounted in the pagoda, and the jungle partly cleared

in front; and towards Puzendoon, a strong post, called the White House, was occupied with a view to cover the town. As, however, the day of trial appeared to be still distant, a secret expedition was spoken of, which created a great sensation in the army, as report stated it to be destined either for Panlang or Bassien; nothing certain, however, transpired, and the detachment had embarked and sailed before its object was known, and then it appeared that the ancient capital of Pegue was the point threatened.

On the 27th of November, four hundred of the Madras European regiment, and four hundred Sepoys, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Mallet, of his Majesty's eighty-ninth regiment, embarked in the row-boats, escorted by the men-of-war boats, under Captain Chads, Royal Navy, and proceeded up the Pegue river. On passing Syriam, some shots were fired, which intimated that the enemy had re-occupied the post; but this did not detain us, and the next morning, at sunrise, we were rapidly sailing up the stream. Our little fleet of forty-five boats, decked with their colours, and looking very brilliant from the red dress of the troops, had a very imposing appearance, and considerably astonished the inhabitants of Dezat, before which we appeared at a sudden turn of the river. This was the first inhabited town we had seen since our arrival in Burmah, and we were in hopes that the conciliatory measures pursued by us would have induced the inhabitants to remain in their houses,

but our endeavours were fruitless; they rushed to their canoes, and paddling off with great velocity, soon distanced our fastest boats, whilst those who had no means of conveyance by water, seized their trifling property, and placing it on their heads, made the best of their way into the interior. A canoe, full of terrified women, however, fell into our hands; but we immediately released it, desiring the passengers to inform the villagers that we would not molest them.

The banks of the river, which had hitherto borne a pleasing, cultivated aspect, began now to assume a wild, savage appearance; the river had diminished in width about one half; the banks were steep and muddy, whilst impenetrable jungle, extending on either side, excluded from our view any variety of prospect, and appeared to indicate that it had not, for years, or perhaps ever, been the abode of man; all was solitude and silence, enlivened only by the occasional flight of large flocks of wild fowl of every description.

During a run of fourteen miles, we met with no other traces of the country having been inhabited, than the ruins of an immense pagoda, now covered with bushes and rubbish, but which, most likely, in former days, had been surrounded by an extensive village; it was called Macoing, and must have fallen to decay long since. From thence to the hamlet of Obo, where we anchored, the banks were covered with jungle grass, between fifteen and twenty feet high, interspersed with quantities of plantains, the

remains of former cultivation. The inhabitants had fled at our approach, but had left all the live stock of their small farms, consisting solely of poultry, which, to us, proved a valuable prize. The contents of a Burman poultry-yard are generally procured from the jungle, which abounds in wild fowl. The mode of catching the latter is very ingenious, and attended with great success. The fowler, when he finds a spot in the jungle apparently resorted to by the feathered tribe, lays his trap, consisting of a number of nooses, which are all commanded by a string he holds in his hand. A tame cock is then planted near the trap, who, by crowing, soon decoys some of his brethren of the forest into the fowler's snare. The jungle-fowl are small, but very pretty; and in their domestic state, retain all their beauty.

Whilst we were walking about the vicinity of the village, we discovered, in a remote spot under the shade of a clump of bamboos, a poor man and his family, who were crouching under the bushes in the greatest terror. It is impossible to figure an unfortunate being more under the influence of fear than he was. He threw himself at our feet, and repeatedly lifting his hands to his head, begged for life, not doubting but that it was our intention to put an end to his existence; with much difficulty he was persuaded to the contrary, and informed that he would be remunerated for any thing taken from the village; and his fears being at last calmed, he went back, and shortly returned with his family, consisting of his aged

mother, his wife, who was an interesting looking young woman, and two children. When they had been placed in possession of their former habitation, the man recovered his composure, and the old lady, who had hitherto been staring about with the imbecility of extreme old age, began to recognise objects familiar to her, and immediately commenced collecting her household utensils, which had been scattered around. The young woman could not be so easily quieted, but exhibited the deepest despair; untying the snood which bound her hair, she shook it wildly over her shoulders, and striking her breast, and knocking her forehead against the ground, she pleaded for mercy, which we never thought of withholding. The terror caused by our sudden appearance is not to be wondered at, as we had hitherto held no communication with the surrounding villages; and the natives merely hearing of the white strangers, through the medium of exaggerated reports, no doubt considered us to be ferocious and sanguinary to the greatest degree.

The village of Obo, before the arrival of the British at Rangoon, stood on the right bank of the river, which is here about sixty yards wide, and fordable at low water; but the villagers, thinking they would be safer by crossing the stream, transferred the houses to the opposite bank! We were informed here that our approach was known at Pegue, and that all the inhabitants had left the town. The next morning we fell in with a fire-raft aground,

which had been evidently intended to annoy us during the night, and near it was a small stockaded village. From thence to Pegue, the face of the country was much the same: high grassy banks, extensive plains, bearing the traces of former cultivation, and in the distance, the Galadzet and Sitaung mountains, whilst every now and then we could see the lofty spire of the Shoemadoo pagoda.

On approaching Pegue*, our curiosity became much heightened, by the anxiety to behold the capital of this unfortunate, but once-flourishing kingdom; and setting aside the chance of engaging the enemy, which seemed very problematical, we thought only of the interest attached to the ruins of this ill-fated city. Its sudden downfall from the height of splendour to insignificance, the crimes of which it had been the theatre, and the blood which had been spilt under its walls, in the last effort it made to retain its independence, all conspired to render the spot exceedingly interesting, and made it quite a classical memento with regard to the history of this country.

With the exception of a few shots fired from a village on the river's bank, we met with no opposition, nor did we see a human being; but proceeding onwards arrived opposite a long line of straggling houses on the bank of the river, which had now dwindled into a comparatively small stream. Here the troops were ordered to land, and a reconnoitring party was sent forward in the direction of the Pa-

* Pegue is generally called Bagoo by the natives.

goda, which appeared a mile and a half distant, and separated from us by a high bamboo hedge, which completely limited the view. The guide who preceded us, moved towards the hedge, until we came to a narrow causeway, one hundred yards long, leading directly up to it, and having on either side a sheet of water of great length, and considerable breadth, which we immediately recognised as the ditch of Pegue. The bamboo hedge proved to be growing on what had once been a substantial brick wall, but was now a heap of rubbish, through which we passed, where a gate had formerly stood.

On entering the precincts of the town, the eye in vain searches for those memorials of former greatness, which might indicate days of splendour, now gone by: the only striking object within a vast area of four square miles, the limits of which were clearly defined by the line of ramparts, being that far-famed temple, the Shoemadoo.

It stands in the north-east corner of the square, on a slightly-elevated ground, and is surrounded by a few minor pagodas, kioums, and a miserable collection of huts; the rest of the square was cultivated with rice: still here and there a remnant of brick pointed out where a street had once been; but now all was desolate.

There is something very melancholy in contemplating a scene like this, and contrasting in idea the past and the present. Here, not eighty years since, flourished one of the finest cities of the east, re-

nowned in arms, and governed by the descendants of a long race of kings, but "now how fallen, how changed!" In one year Pegue witnessed the downfall of that power and preponderance which ages had been maturing—her sovereign and royal family, the captives of an elated conqueror, were soon exterminated, —those temples to which all the empire crowded to offer up its adorations, no longer the resort of multitudes, were neglected, and fell into disrepute, whilst the inhabitants of the city were scattered over the country, and became the despised subjects of that very race whom they had before tyrannized over.

The Peguers who still remain here, as if shunning this melancholy, dreary scene, and the recollections it might entail on them, no longer erect their huts within the city walls, but build their lowly dwellings on the bank of the river, where they form a long, straggling street, extending nearly a mile in length, and constituting the present town of Pegue.

The Shoemadoo Pagoda proved to be unoccupied by the enemy, and we ascended to it by a flight of steps, leading to the upper terrace. In point of sanctity this Pagoda is more revered than any other in Ava, and is a very splendid pile, though appearing to disadvantage when compared with the Shoedagon, the lapse of years and neglect having destroyed the gilding which formerly adorned it. It is said to have been erected two thousand three hundred years ago, and a tradition is related of its origin, which is

rather too marvellous to be true. It states that two merchants, having agreed to erect a small pagoda to the deity, built one a cubit high, which during the night had increased to double the size. Encouraged by this phenomenon, which they interpreted as the work of the Gods, they continued their labours, and, the ensuing day, found their piety again rewarded by the assistance of invisible hands. Thus, in a few days, the building rose to the height of twelve cubits, when they ceased*. The fame of this miracle soon drew all the inhabitants around to adore this work of the deity, and by the piety of the succeeding kings of Pegue, it was gradually increased, until it attained its present dimensions. We were much disappointed on entering the terrace, to find that the area was totally destitute of those assemblages of gods and curious temples which adorn the Shoe Dagon at Rangoon. Nothing was to be seen but two or three ruinous sheds, and some half-finished idols; and judging from the luxuriant growth of the grass, one might infer that the Shoemadoo had lost much of its sanctity in the eyes of the present generation; on the east side, however, we discovered a temporary building, which contained one of the most curious collection of gods we had yet met with.

In the inner part of this temple, with its back resting against the pagoda, sat a large image of Gaudma, in full costume, holding a grand divan. On its right and left, were placed two attendant deities of a smaller

* Symes's Ava.

size, whilst in a crescent, of which they formed the centre, about three hundred gilt images were ranged in double rows. The walls of the apartment were, in like manner, ornamented by three tiers of Gaudmas, a foot high, and amounting to five or six hundred, but none of any beauty or value.

The outer room appeared to be set apart for the offerings of those who wished to conciliate Gaudma, or to obtain his protection. In one part of it, stood the copies of two or three temples, richly gilt and ornamented; in another, were the models of two war-boats, and from the roof were suspended many long streamers of cut paper and scrolls, with prayers inscribed upon them. Flowers and rice lay strewed about the ground or on small altars.

Opposite this temple, was a marble slab fixed upright in the ground, under an arched roof; and on this, the different donations bestowed on the temple were enregistered. The bells were few in number, and not of great magnitude. The Shoemadoo is three hundred and thirty-one feet high, and is superior, in point of architectural beauty, to the Shoedagon; its proportions are more delicate, and the pagodas, at the base, are ranged with greater regularity.

A fine shady grove extended round three sides of the pagoda, under which the houses of the Poonghis were built. Some of these were very comfortable, and one in particular struck me, from its peculiarly neat and cleanly appearance.

It was built in a small dell at the foot of the Pagoda hill, and was delightfully shaded by mango and tamarind trees, interlaced by various creepers, which throw out their tendrils and bind the thickest and loftiest trees in their toils, often destroying by their fecundity the tree which supported them. Under these was the house, and close to it ran a stream. The apartments in this kioum were neatly spread with mats to recline on; books, lying on the floor, appeared to have been just thrown aside; numbers of cooking and other utensils were neatly ranged on shelves, and in one of the rooms half a dozen penates had been left on the table by the fugitive owners: these we were not sacrilegious enough to touch; but returned to our boats, and deferred till the morrow taking a closer view of the old fortifications.

The walls of Pegue face the cardinal points, and form a square two thousand six hundred yards in diameter. They had been of great strength, and were formerly flanked by equidistant bastions, of which scarcely any traces now remain. The gates, eight in number, are approached by as many causeways running through the ditch, which is now much filled with rubbish, although at one time it must have contained a considerable quantity of water, and have offered an insurmountable obstacle to the assaults of the Burmahs, who, when they captured Pegue in 1757, did not attempt to storm the city, but confined themselves to a blockade. The height

of the wall had been about thirty feet, and between it and the ditch ran a berme thirty feet wide; on the whole, it was no contemptible work, and must have been thrown up with great labour.

The view of the adjacent country, as seen from the Shoemadoo, is very extensive. Plains, free from jungle, extend as far as the eye can reach, and are diversified here and there by clumps of trees, or the ruins of a pagoda, indicating where villages formerly existed. To the north-east the Sitang mountains rise to a considerable height; and to the north-west are the Galadzet hills, whence the Pegue river derives its source, and then winds through the plain. A few small villages could be discerned, but the country did not appear to be much cultivated.

The Peguers or, as they are called by the Burmahs, Talliens, are not easily distinguishable from their conquerors, whose privileges and immunities they enjoy, and with whom they are fast amalgamating: they are still, however, debarred from holding high offices of trust. On the fall of the kingdom of Pegue, all those who wished to avoid the Burman government, or evade the vengeance of Alomprah, fled to Siam for protection, and there their descendants are now living; but the remnant of the population of Pegue was dispersed, and their places filled up by the Burmahs. This arbitrary but judicious plan, so extremely well calculated to break the spirit of the fallen nation, had the desired effect; and all the royal family being extinct, by the

execution of the old king, Beinga Della, who was put to death by Shambueh in 1769, after twelve years' captivity, the Talliens had no longer a rallying point, but began to look up to the King of Ava as their sovereign.

Intermarrying and constant intercourse have further cemented this union: but still the deep-rooted antipathy that existed between the two nations is far from quelled; and there is little doubt that the Peguers would willingly again fly to arms, and make an effort to assert their independence, had they but one of the Royal blood left to take the lead.

On the evening of the 30th of November, we left Pegue, and the next day heard a very heavy firing in the direction of Rangoon. This was accounted for when we reached Dezat, where we were informed that a communication had been received from the Maha Bundoolah, stating his intention of attacking the English camp, with a large army, on the 1st of December; we therefore moved on as rapidly as the tide would permit, and arriving at Rangoon on the 2nd, found that our army was completely hemmed in and besieged by the Burman forces.

CHAPTER VI.

Advance of the Burman Army on Rangoon—Surround the British Position—Charge of the Thirteenth Light Infantry—Sortie from the Dagon—Enemy's Trenches—Attack on Kemundine—Defeat of the Burman Left Wing and Centre—Enemy retires, and is defeated at Dalla—Rangoon set on fire—Kokien Stockades stormed—The Bundoolah retires to Denobiu—We prepare to advance—Peguers join us—Letters from Bundoolah—Siamese—Syrian—Tantabain.

The new scene that was about to open on us could not fail to become one of the deepest interest, as it was to be expected that every resource which the revenues and population of Ava could afford would be employed to expel us from the kingdom. We hailed, however, with much satisfaction, the long wished-for opportunity of meeting these undisciplined hordes on the field of battle; nor did we for one instant entertain doubts of success, notwithstanding the unfortunate circumstance of having our hospitals so crowded with sick and convalescents that we should necessarily find ourselves compelled to act against the enemy with very disproportionate forces.

The Burmahs, on the other hand, were not ignorant of their advantages, and confiding in them with their characteristic presumption, were advancing upon us with all the enthusiasm with which the talent and bravery of their leader could inspire

them; and the Bundoolah, elated by his trifling successes on our eastern frontier, as vainly supposed that his usual good fortune would give him an easy conquest over British soldiers.

The Burman army had been assembling during the whole of the rainy season, at Denobiu, and was supposed to amount to between sixty and seventy thousand men, recruited from all the provinces of the kingdom, and organised upon the nucleus of the Arracan army, which had been seventeen thousand strong. Of this host, part were armed with muskets, part with spears and swords, and a large portion were pioneers and coolies, who carried entrenching tools, for the purpose of occasionally throwing up works. This force was accompanied by a numerous train of artillery, supplied with ammunition of every description; but the only cavalry attached to it was a small corps, of five hundred Cassay horse, which was in every respect contemptible. The men are mounted on the small sturdy ponies of the country, and ride in a saddle of a peculiar form, generally much ornamented, and covered with a rich cloth. The stirrups are very short, and pendent on either side of the saddle are flaps made of red japan gilt, which, when agitated by the motion of the horse in its speed, cause a clattering noise, meant to produce an imposing effect upon the enemy. The bridle is likewise much ornamented, and varies in its degree of richness according to the rank of the owner. The men are habited much like the infantry, except that

they wear a loose flowing jacket, reaching down to the knees, and that their head-dress is somewhat different. Spears and swords are their usual weapons, and they occasionally carry small bundles of javelins, which they throw when in full career.

The Maha Bundoolah, having made the necessary preparations, and directed all the minor corps to concentrate upon Rangoon, quitted his cantonments at Denobiu, and marched with such rapidity that he arrived within five days before the Shoe Dagon, and thus anticipated any intelligence we might receive of his approach. But it was ascertained at head-quarters on the 30th November, that he had left Denobiu, and one of our reconnoitring parties, patrolling on the road by which he was expected to approach, fell in with his advanced guard on the same day at a short distance from our lines, and thus enabled us to make preparations for his reception.

Our position was now taken up as follows. The Pagoda, as was before observed, was the united *point d'appui* of the two lines of infantry, forming the extreme left, should the enemy advance from the east, and the right, if attacked from the west or Kemundine side. Or this might be still better understood by considering the Pagoda as the salient angular point of an acute triangle, of which our two lines of infantry were the sides, and the town of Rangoon itself the base. Twenty pieces of artillery were mounted on its terraces, it was garrisoned

in the interior by three hundred men of his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, and the twenty-eighth Madras infantry was stationed at its base, fronting the Kykloo road. The heights between the Pagoda and the town were occupied by his Majesty's thirteenth light infantry, with some guns, and lower down towards the stockade at Rangoon, the remainder of the army was posted according to the nature of the ground.

The White House was defended by a strong detachment of two hundred of the Madras European infantry, and some Sepoys with artillery; and finally, the post of Kemundine was garrisoned with the twenty-sixth Madras native infantry under Major Yates, and a few of the Madras European regiment.

On the 1st December the Burmahs made their appearance on the Kykloo road, nearly at the base of the Pagoda, and immediately engaging one of our pickets, planted a flag upon the ground, and began to entrench themselves behind it. Another and larger division was observed at the same time advancing towards the plain at the end of the lake, and which likewise lost no time in entrenching itself. This latter corps was accompanied by several officers of rank, judging from the number of gilt umbrellas surrounding them, and the many distinguishing flags which were carried behind them. They were escorted by a small party of cavalry which, on observing that we had withdrawn our advanced picket from Puzendoon, took possession of that post.

In the mean time, a corps of the enemy, estimated at thirty thousand men, crossed to the island of Dalla, which we had previously evacuated, and endeavoured to annoy our shipping by a desultory fire from that quarter; whilst at Kemundine, which was now reinforced by his Majesty's ship Sophia, Captain Ryves, and the Satellite anchored opposite to it, a good deal of skirmishing took place with no advantage to the enemy.

But it was evident that the attention of the Burmahs was chiefly directed to the Pagoda, and that the most determined attack would be made upon that point; although they cautiously concealed the force which was intended for this service, by only advancing under our observation the heads of the columns that were to be engaged in it. As it was, however, of importance for us to ascertain, as soon as possible, the strength and distribution of the enemy, Sir Archibald Campbell, with a view to extend his observation in front, ordered Major Sale, with his Majesty's thirteenth light infantry, and the eighteenth Madras native infantry, under Captain Ross, to attack their left, posted at the extremity of the lake, and to drive it from the entrenchments which they had already nearly completed. This service was executed in a very gallant manner, the thirteenth dashing through the enemy's works, and carrying all before it, though with severe loss, Captain O'Shea being killed, and five officers of the same regiment wounded; nor were the Sepoys less

conspicuously distinguished by their spirited conduct. Night coming on, put a stop to the pursuit of the enemy, who, as soon as our troops returned to the lines, re-occupied their former ground.

On the following morning, two distinct sorties were made from the Pagoda, each consisting of one hundred men of the thirty-eighth, and respectively commanded by Captains Piper and Wilson of that regiment. They succeeded in driving the Burmahs from their entrenchment, which was all that was required; and as the jungle was too thick to admit of being penetrated without certain defeat, when it was occupied in such force by the enemy, they were ordered to desist from further pursuit: indeed the General, on every occasion, was desirous, as far as circumstances would permit, to avoid any partial engagements with the Burmahs, which, without any adequate advantage to be obtained, would only tend to the gradual diminution of our numbers. His great object, in short, was to bring on a general action in the plain, and he trusted to the excessive vanity of the Burmahs themselves, for a favourable opportunity of effecting this at no very distant period.

During the night of the 2d, the Burmahs were indefatigable in throwing up works, and on the morning of the 3d, they took possession of the hill opposite the Pagoda, where our advanced post had formerly stood, where they fortified themselves with abatis, and advanced their entrenchments to within

three hundred yards of our position. On the plain, and particularly in front of the White House, they likewise availed themselves of the obscurity, to approach much nearer to our lines.

The rapidity with which the Burmahs construct their works is almost inconceivable; nor is the nature of their defences less to be admired, making allowances for the deficiency of their resources, as contrasted with those of European nations. Each man digs a hole, in which he places himself under shelter; these are connected together by one common trench, which is advanced by regular zig-zag approaches, until within a few yards of the point of attack.

The trenches are so scooped out that they afford perfect cover from musketry and artillery, and in great measure from the explosion of a shell: they are also well calculated to repel and attack, being strengthened by rows of railings and an abatis.

Generally speaking, the Burman troops did not appear to suffer very much from the effects of our artillery; for the moment a gun fired, and under cover of the dust made by a shot striking the trenches, they would start up and fire a volley. One man, in particular, made himself very conspicuous, by his apparent contempt of danger, which he manifested by jumping and dancing on the trench, as if in defiance, and addressing us from thence in the coarsest strain of abuse.

For some time he was fortunate enough to escape

unhurt, and I repeatedly saw from forty to fifty shots fired at him without effect; but, one day, his protecting charm losing its virtues, or his good luck failing him, he was struck by a musket-ball, and giving one convulsive bound, fell back and appeared no more.

Whilst our attention was thus occupied at the Dagon, the little detachment at Kemundine was repeatedly attacked by large bodies of the enemy, who seemed bent on obtaining possession of that post; the rolls of musketry and discharges of cannon from the contending parties were incessant, and, at daybreak, every morning a blaze of light might be seen illumining the horizon in that direction, caused by tremendous fire-rafts launched from Pagoda Point by the Burmahs. These engines of destruction were escorted by a fleet of war-boats, until within a short distance from the brigs, and it was not without great difficulty and perseverance that our sailors succeeded in averting the impending danger. At Dalla, also, the enemy had erected stockades, and thrown up some batteries to play upon the shipping, but the fire from our men of war and transports effectually frustrated these attempts to annoy us.

The plan pursued by the Commander of the forces completely misled the enemy, who, no doubt, attributed our inaction to the effects of fear, and our own troops viewed with great reluctance the daily encroachments of the Burmahs, and expressed much anxiety to be led against them. At last, on the 5th, the whole left wing of the Burman army, having de-

ployed on the plain under cover of its entrenchments, Sir A. Campbell deemed the moment to have arrived when a decisive blow might be struck; and for this purpose, directed Captain Chads, Royal Navy, to proceed with the gun-boats up the Moriec river, to the rear of the enemy's lines, and thence keep up a rapid fire of guns and mortars to attract his attention, whilst two columns should simultaneously attack the entrenchments by land. One of these, under Major Sale, consisting of one thousand one hundred infantry, and a troop of the Governor-General's body-guard, advanced from the centre of our lines, in order to storm the entrenchments at the end of the lake, and thus cut off the whole left wing; and the other, six hundred strong, commanded by Major Walker, marched from the White House, and attacked the enemy's flank. At the same time, Captain Piper, with the light company of his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, made a diversion in front of the pagoda.

The troops under Major Walker were engaged some time before Major Sale's detachment; and on approaching the trenches, received a well-directed volley, which proved fatal to their gallant commander, but dashing on, they forced the abatis, and cleared the trenches. At this moment, the Cassay horse charged from behind a clump of trees, with the intention of cutting off the return of the wounded, and would have proved very troublesome, had not a few rounds of well-directed grape from the White

House obliged them to retire. Major Sale, on his side, carried the works opposed to him, with but slight opposition, as the Burmahs were much disheartened by the advance of the other column. The plain beyond was covered with about six thousand fugitives of horse and foot, intermixed; but as their celerity in retiring did not allow us to pursue them, the troops halted, previous to attacking other positions which the enemy continued to occupy in reserve. These consisted of four circular entrenchments, mounted with cannon; and as the Burman standards were still flying upon them, and the fire of their artillery had not slackened, we concluded they intended making a resolute defence; however, it proved otherwise: our troops rushed into the trenches so rapidly, that they had not time to prolong their resistance, but fled, leaving a number of killed and wounded behind them, with the whole of their ammunition and entrenching tools, besides thirty pieces of brass cannon, a few jingals, and several hundred stand of arms. A few prisoners were likewise taken, all of whom expected instant death: some of them were in a state of stupefaction, and others excited to a pitch of frenzy, from the immoderate use of opium, of which we found a large quantity made up into pills; but we noticed amongst these prisoners, two or three who supported their misfortune with a calm, independent spirit, and appeared to view, with much contempt, those of their companions who were under the effect of intoxication. A number

of tablets were found, which proved, for the most part, to be muster-rolls or orderly books; and amongst other papers, was one containing an excellent plan of the attack at Rangoon, and a public document belonging to Captain Trueman, who was killed at Ramoo. The Burmahs do not appear to set much value on their colours, those that we took having been fixed on the parapet of the entrenchment, and there abandoned without an effort to rescue them from our hands; they were made some of silk, others of coarser materials, and bore the effigy of a Braminy goose*, or a peacock, marked in the centre. In the course of an hour after the commencement of the action, not a Burmah was to be seen; in order, however, to prevent the position being re-occupied, Major Sale encamped at the end of the lake.

On the 6th the centre of the Burman army, apparently not daunted by the defeat of the left wing, still continued advancing its trenches, and had pushed them within one hundred yards of our guns; but the next morning, four columns, amounting to fifteen hundred men, commanded severally by Colonels Mallet, Brodie, and Parlby, and Captain Wilson, moved forward from the pagoda, under cover of our artillery, and attacking the entrenched hill at different points, in a few moments obtained entire possession of it, the enemy all retreating by the Kykloo road, where we were unable to pursue them, our

* The Henza or Braminy goose is the national emblem of both Pegue and Ava.

handful of men being dreadfully harassed by the hard duty and exertion of the preceding week. A number of men were lying here killed by our shells, but the greater part of the former had been carried away and buried, not so much from any respect on the part of the Burmahs for the corpses of their departed comrades, as to prevent the minds of the survivors being depressed by the sight, and also to conceal the extent of their loss from us. On the 8th the enemy made his last and most desperate attack on Kemundine, but was again repulsed with a most heavy loss, and finally evacuated the trenches and retired. The defence of Kemundine reflected great credit on Major Yates and the twenty-sixth Madras Native infantry; who, although they were unable for eight days to obtain any rest, or even to cook their food, maintained their position with the greatest spirit and good will.

Of the multitudes which had encircled us, none now remained except the force at Dalla, where the stockades were still occupied; but, on the 10th, Lieutenant-colonel Parlby, with part of his Majesty's eighty-ninth, and some Sepoys, proceeded across the river, and captured the works with a very heavy loss to the enemy. A curious circumstance occurred here which was related to us at Prome. The Burmahs had been directed to fire at the officers, and a tall officer of the eighty-ninth regiment, who was leading on his men, particularly attracted their notice. Twenty of the best shots immediately se-

lected him as a mark, and fired, but missed; when, seeing that several men around him had fallen though he was unhurt, they concluded he bore a charmed life, and immediately fled.

It was supposed that the dispersion of the Burman forces was now complete, and they were represented as having retired with the greatest rapidity; but the information we received a few days afterwards induced us to believe that they had not only rallied the greatest part of their army, but actually intended attacking us again. In the mean time they had been observed from the Dagon employed in strengthening the stockade at Kokien, which appeared to have been considerably enlarged; and a reconnoitring party being sent in that direction perceived the enemy to be in great force.

Although we had been thus successful in repelling the open attack of our foes, we were very nearly suffering severely by their designing intrigues. Some Burmahs, residing in Rangoon, had, it appears, been bought over by the enemy, and after giving every possible information, had further agreed to set fire to the town on the night of the 14th, when the Burman army, profiting by the confusion, might penetrate the stockade and destroy all our magazines. This plan was partly put into execution; flames were seen issuing from several houses in different parts of the town, and in a short time the main street was burnt to ashes. Fortunately the wind subsiding, enabled the fire to be quenched without its having

injured many public stores, but a great deal of private property was destroyed. The ensuing morning we prepared to attack the new position of the enemy at Kokien. This stockade was two miles from the Dagon, on the Kykloo road; to its front ran a swamp, and the flanks and road were defended by a thick jungle; it was, however, possible to attain the road by taking a circuit and marching through the plains of Joazong. In furtherance of the plans laid by Sir A. Campbell, Brigadier-general W. Cotton* received instructions to proceed with his Majesty's thirteenth light infantry, some detachments of Native infantry, and a troop of the Governor-general's body-guard—in all six hundred men, to the rear of the works at Kokien; when, on his firing a signal, a simultaneous attack would be made by Sir A. Campbell on the front face. The latter took with himself detachments from his Majesty's thirty-eighth, forty-first, and eighty-ninth regiments, Madras European regiment, and a few Sepoys, amounting to eight hundred men, with some of the body-guard and artillery, marching by the direct road arrived early in front of the work, where he made his dispositions for attacking in two columns on both flanks of the position, which presented a most formidable appearance. It consisted of two well built stockades on rising ground: the space between was occu-

* Brigadier-general W. Cotton was now second in command of the army, General Macbean having been appointed to the force in Arracan.

pied by six circular entrenchments well defended by an abatis, and swarming with men; and the whole, though three miles in circumference, and erected in less than a fortnight, was constructed with more ingenuity and talent than had yet been evinced in any of the Burman fortifications.

The command of the columns destined for the attack of the left stockade was given to Major T. Evans, of his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, whilst that of the right was under Lieutenant-colonel Miles, of his Majesty's eighty-ninth regiment, and both were directed to take up a position under the work, and there wait under cover for the signal to storm.

In the mean time General Cotton arrived with his division in the rear of the enemy, and dashing on with the thirteenth light infantry in front became exposed to the whole fire of the position. It was very heavy, and occasioned a great loss to the thirteenth, which corps though now only two hundred and twenty strong, had three officers killed*, Major Sale and six others wounded, and seventy men killed and wounded; the remainder, however, gallantly advanced through three entrenchments, and succeeded on entering the left stockade. At the same time his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment escalading at the opposite side, and cutting off the retreat of the Burmahs, made great havoc with the bayonet, whilst the eighty-ninth stormed and took possession of the upper work; so that in the course of twenty minutes

* Lieutenants Darby, Petre, and Jones.

this numerous force of twenty-five thousand men was defeated and dispersed by our little band, leaving a number of slain on the field, and two thousand five hundred muskets, which, to the Burmahs, were of more importance than the loss of men. On the plain the Governor-general's body-guard, under Lieutenant Archbold, made a dashing charge on a body of Cassay horse and infantry, which had formed in line and awaited the shock of our cavalry; and on the river, success equally attended our arms; the men-of-war and gun boats, commanded by Lieutenant Kellett, having pursued and captured a large fleet of the enemy's boats laden with ammunition.

The numerical force of the Burmahs was so very disproportionate to ours, that it seems quite astonishing we should have succeeded so well, though with the loss of sixteen officers and one hundred and forty men killed and wounded. But the Burmahs now began to be sensible of their own inferiority, and dreaded coming in contact with the British bayonet. The Maha Silwa commanded in this engagement, and was confident of success, in consequence of the Bundoolah having inspected the works in the morning, and assured the army that the English could not take them. He soon, however, found himself mistaken, and that very evening retired with seven thousand men from Tadaghee, where he had built a stockade, and did not halt until he reached Denobiu, where he commenced reorganizing his force. Maha Silwa, with all that he could collect, amounting to

only two thousand men, fled to Mopie and there remained; and the rest of this splendid army, which had been six months in collecting, was now completely dispersed, the men who composed it returning to their respective homes.

The loss of the Burmahs from the 1st to the 15th was calculated at six thousand men; ours, during the same period, amounted to about forty officers and five hundred men killed and wounded.

Finding ourselves now released from our troublesome visiters, every possible exertion was made to enable the army to move by the 1st of January; but alas! of what avail were good intentions when the means were wanting? We had only two thousand draught or carriage cattle, and these were reduced to such a state of exhaustion from the sea-voyage, that not above half the number were fit for service. We had just boats enough to carry the troops destined for the water-column and their provisions, without burdening them with stores for the land-force. Our fresh provisions were nearly exhausted; no reliance could be placed on the supplies we expected to derive from the country, and everything concurred in rendering the attempt to leave Rangoon that season nearly impracticable. But the activity and perseverance of Sir A. Campbell were not to be daunted by these obstacles. He determined to make the trial, knowing that every day we remained at Rangoon increased our difficulties, whilst every foot we advanced gave us a better prospect of gaining over

the inhabitants to our side, and procuring supplies from them: he therefore issued orders to his army to prepare for marching on the 1st of January, and lost no time in encouraging the different departments to exert themselves.

Towards the end of the year, the army received a most valuable addition to its force by the arrival of the first troop of the Bengal Horse-artillery, the Rocket-troop, the remainder of the Governor-generals body-guard with four gal!oper guns, his Majesty's forty-seventh regiment, and, shortly afterwards, his Majesty's Royal regiment—an augmentation which had become essentially necessary, as the European force was now much reduced.

Whilst our internal arrangements were making considerable progress, a change took place in the political sentiments of the villagers near Rangoon, which promised to produce a material alteration for the better in our situation. No sooner was it ascertained by the Peguers at Dalla, near Elephant Point, and other southern parts, that the army was actually preparing to move up the country, than they rose against the few Burmahs who had been left to watch them, and, declaring their intention of joining us, sent in a deputation for the purpose of soliciting our aid. This, of course, was immediately granted, and the whole flotilla directed to proceed down the river and assist the peasants, who in the mean time kept their ground, and had two or three skirmishes with the Burmahs: with our assistance they easily pre-

vailed; and instantly embarking in their own and our boats, proceeded up to Rangoon, bringing with them their families and little household goods. We allotted places to them for building at Puzendoon, Tackley, and outside the town, and in a short time they erected their habitations and settled themselves.

Although we derived no great assistance at the moment from this accession to our cause, as the poor wretches were unable to supply us with anything beyond a very few buffaloes, yet it eventually proved of the greatest importance, as it not only showed the population of the country that we should treat them well if they would join us, but was the cause of many others coming in afterwards. The example once given, and freedom of intercourse established, those unfortunate beings who fled from the town on our arrival, and who since then had been living in the jungle, finding their fears removed by the kind reception given to others, no longer hesitated between comfort in Rangoon and an errant life in the forest, but brought in their wives and families; so that a few weeks after the army had advanced, Rangoon held more inhabitants than at any former period. From them we obtained a few canoes for the transport of stores; an acquisition which, though small, was invaluable, as these and some flat boats we had built when at Rangoon were the principal means of conveyance we had for our provisions.

On the 14th of January a singular document was presented to the General by a deserter from one of

our ships, who was sent down by the Bundoolah, and furnished with a passport. The letter was not addressed to Sir A. Campbell, but the bearer had received instructions to deliver it only into his hands. The following is the translation.

"*Letter from* Woen Sheondah Alioon Menghee, Maha Bundoolah, *to Messrs.* Gibson, Aratoon, Sarkies, Turner, Snowball, *and* Manuel,—*Greeting*,—

"The chiefs of Munnipoor, by name Jahewytie and Marwye (small men), forgetting their allegiance to the golden king, revolted from his authority, and ran away into the country of the English, which the king heard. For many years friendship has subsisted between the two nations, and therefore it was not right the English should have received and kept these two rebels; therefore the king gave an order they should be demanded, and I then sent to the British Chokies at Shapuree and Rutnapullung, on the subject, but the people there would not attend to what was necessary to be said—and with the few men that were there, the said people made fight.—How strange it is that, for two paltry men, war should break out between our nations! therefore did I afterwards remain at Arracan, waiting daily in the hope of hearing and understanding the reason of this; but I never could succeed in getting thoroughly at the bottom of it. Therefore, when I could only learn that, on account of these two paltry men, war had commenced, and the ancient friendship of

the two nations been destroyed, I returned from Arracan, and on the way heard that the English had taken Rangoon, Martaban, Mergui and Tavoy; and upon this, too, I received the king's orders to proceed and ascertain the causes of this proceeding, and to find out from the English, why they had devastated our provinces.

"In obedience to this order, I arrived at Sambeghewn, and with the view of obtaining correct information, despatched three chiefs, Mengie Maha, Meinzla Yaza (Chekey Woon), Mengie Meinzloraha Meingoon, and Meindeirm Menghaon, each in command of a division of the army, consisting of ten thousand musketeers, coolies attached two thousand, three thousand fighting men, not musketeers, with six thousand working men, and two hundred horse, to proceed to Rangoon.

"At the Shoe Dagon Prah of Rangoon, at Kemundine, Dalla and Kokien, there was much fighting, and many men wounded, which I have heard from the report of the chiefs whom I sent down to command.—Now, on hearing this, I moved from Sembeghewn with my force, and arrived at Denobiu on the 15th of Peeazoo; I hear, Mr. Gibson, that you are now at Rangoon, and you are a man whom the golden king has conferred great honours on. You, Messrs. Aratoon, Sarkies, Turner, Snowball, and Manuel, are merchants who have carried on traffic between the two nations, and it will therefore be proper you should do every thing in your power for

the service of the king, under whose protection you have so long lived. The English having invaded the country, I am very anxious to know with what views or intentions they have come, whether with the wish of devastating all our kingdom, or for what purpose: therefore some of my people having captured a foreigner, I send this despatch by him, and when it reaches you, desire that you will afford me all the information regarding the wishes or intentions of the English, that you can obtain from them."

This letter was accompanied by an order addressed to the Burman chieftains, which, as it is expressive of a desire to place the war on a more civilized footing, deserves mentioning: it ran as follows:

"I, Maha Bundoolah, having with me an immense army, elephants, horses, &c., have arrived at Denobiu on the 15th of Peeazoo, and having first understood and ascertained the state of my affairs, will then act as may be best.

"I have now sent a foreigner, by name Kummo, with this; let him pass and repass, without hinderance or molestation, and ask him no questions. When the chief of an army gives an order, whether to fight or any thing else, the soldier will obey it, but till he receives an order, his duty is not to do anything of his own accord. As for the foreigners who, during the present war, may have been taken or put to death, or ill-treated, that is now irrevocable; but now

should any of them fall into our hands, take care that they are not killed or maltreated in any way.—In the present case, the bearer has fallen into our hands, and is returning with this despatch, having received every kindness and good treatment, as well as food and money, and therefore let him go backwards and forwards, without molestation."

The attempt at deception in the first letter is amusing, but rather too barefaced, as the Bundoolah could scarcely suppose us ignorant of his having commanded the army at Rangoon. The order in the second, relative to the prisoners, probably originated in the circumstance of our having carried all the wounded Burmahs to our hospitals, where they were properly attended to,—a proceeding so little in consonance with the Burman mode of warfare, that even the Bundoolah may have owned the example worthy of imitation. So little indeed were the wounded themselves aware of our kind intentions, that one of them who had his leg amputated, immediately presented the other to the surgeon, supposing this to be some new kind of torture.

Glad of the opportunity now presented, of opening a communication with the Burman chieftains, and conceiving this letter an indication that the high official authorities were desirous, in some measure, to enter into our terms, and, at all events, to carry on the war in a more humane manner, Sir A. Campbell, in reply, sent the Maha Bundoolah a letter, which

reached him in safety, as we found the envelope in his house when Denobiu was captured; but this did not lead to any beneficial result, no answer being returned, nor was the letter even forwarded to the Court at Ava.

A deputation from the Siamese was now daily expected, and previous to its arrival, Sir A. Campbell received a letter, professing the amicable intentions of that people towards us. This letter, which is a very good specimen of the eastern complimentary style, commenced by calling him—

"The governor over sixty tribes, and the great conqueror over countries, the English hero, the champion of the world; the tamer of elephants, the general victorious over the Burmese, mild and merciful; the leader of leaders, the inspirer of bravery." —The letter ended with—"This is addressed to the presence of the illustrious enthroned English conqueror."

This mission arrived on the 15th of February, after our departure; but although the Siamese promised to make a diversion in our favour, by invading Ava from the eastward, they never fulfilled their engagements.

Syriam had been re-occupied by the Burmahs, previous to the attack on Rangoon, and had not yet been evacuated. Lieutenant-colonel Elrington, with part of his Majesty's forty-seventh regiment, was, therefore, sent (11th of January) to capture the

works, a service he performed with the loss of three officers and thirty-six men, killed and wounded.

Tantabain also was in possession of a Burman force, and a stockade had been erected, commanding the passage of the Tantabain and Lyne rivers.

Lieutenant-colonel Godwin, of his Majesty's forty-first, who had just returned from Martaban, was appointed to the force destined to attack, and composed of detachments from the different corps of the army. On arriving before the works (5th of February), the Colonel summoned the chief to surrender, and received a remarkably polite answer, stating—"That he had been left in charge of the stockade by higher powers, and must, consequently, defend it; but that if the English chief wished, he would transmit the summons to the general commanding, and acquaint him with his answer in three days." This was inadmissible, and our troops advanced to the assault with such celerity, that the fire of thirty pieces of cannon passed over them, and they captured the work without loss, thus entirely clearing the lower part of the country from the remains of the Burman army.

CHAPTER VII.

We march from Rangoon—Meet the Carians—Mopie—Enter Lyne, and march to the banks of the Irrawaddy—Kioums at Sarawah Uadeet—General Cotton repulsed from Denobiu—We retire on Sarawah—Cross the Irrawaddy, and assemble at Henzadah—Detachment sent to Tombay—Kioumziek—Reeds on Fire—Encamp at Koungshah—Arrive at Denobiu.

Our preparations for advancing on Prome being completed, the force destined for that service was divided into two columns, one to proceed by land, and the other by the river, whilst a smaller detachment, under Major Sale, was embarked for Bassien; and, after the capture of that town, directed to effect a junction with head-quarters.

The land-division, under the personal command of Sir A. Campbell, was composed of one thousand three hundred European infantry, one thousand Sepoys, three hundred of the Governor-general's body-guard, a troop of Horse-artillery, and the Rocket-troop; and for this trifling force, it was impossible, with the greatest management, to carry more than one month's provisions. These troops, following the left bank, were, if possible, to unite with the water-column, near Denobiu; but should this measure prove impracticable, in consequence of the numerous branches of the Irrawaddy, which intersect that part of the country, Sarawah, situated more to the northward,

was considered the most eligible point for effecting the junction. Eight hundred Europeans, and a battalion of native infantry, commanded by Brigadier-general Willoughby Cotton, formed the detachment destined to embark in the flotilla of gun-boats, mounting between fifty and sixty guns of heavy calibre, and escorted by the men-of-war boats, and the Diana steam-vessel, under the directions of Captain Alexander, Royal Navy. Sailing up the Panlang river, and clearing its banks from the enemy, at the stockaded positions of Tesit and Panlang, the flotilla was to enter the Irrawaddy at Yangain Chan Yah, and unite with the commander of the forces, whose supply of provisions depended on this movement.

On the 11th of February, the greatest portion of Sir A. Campbell's division marched to the plain of Mienza, and there we pitched our first camp. In the annals of Indian campaigning, such a heterogeneous mixture of tents, as composed it, could, I should think, have never been heard of. The officers, who had no means of transport, found it impossible to carry even a small tent of the usual kind, and all sorts of contrivances had been invented to supply its place: red, yellow, and tartan cloths were used in the fabrication of the little tents, which were formed in the gypsy style, being merely a cloth thrown over a bamboo, and sufficiently large to enable the occupiers to lay down; but as may be supposed these miserable coverings were very inadequate to exclude the rays of a sun at 110° Fahrenheit, or keep off the

heavy dews which fell at night, with all the violence of a shower of rain. The soldiers were so much crowded, that many preferred erecting small tents with bushes and grass; and the camp-followers, with their spare clothes, also formed a rude covering, so that the tout-ensemble of our camp had more the appearance of a Tartar bivouac than of the lines of a disciplined force. For food, the officers depended on the same rations as the men, besides what little groceries and brandy they, in addition to their tent and clothes, could manage to carry on the one miserable bullock, which was appropriated to the use of each, without distinction of rank, by the consideration of the commander of the forces; and as it would be, at least, a month or six weeks before an opportunity would occur of enabling us to replenish our small stock of provisions, it may well be conceived that we did not open the campaign under the most favourable auspices. The spirits of the army, however, were so much elated by the prospect of advancing on Prome, that no privation or hardship could occur to which we would not have cheerfully submitted. It must be recollected that, in Indian campaigns, every subaltern moves with as many attendants and as large a camp-equipage as a British general would have required in Europe, and the higher ranks increase their conveniences in proportion,—a custom which, to English ideas, may appear extravagant and unnecessary, but cannot be dispensed with on account of the climate. Now, therefore,

when every one was as badly, if not worse, equipped than during some of the Peninsula campaigns, those who had been accustomed to march with oriental comforts felt the change very sensibly.

The land column having assembled on the 13th, marched the ensuing morning to Meingaladoon; and three days afterwards General Cotton moved off with his division. The road, or rather path, we followed, was not the route by which the Burman army had passed, but one hitherto little frequented, and leading through a long plain about a mile in width, near the banks of the Lyne river. Traces of elephants were visible on the plain, and those animals are said to exist in great numbers in the recesses of the adjacent forests and jungle. As the country was quite unknown to us, and that we could not rely upon the assertions of our guides, an officer of the Quartermaster-general's department was daily sent with an escort of cavalry in advance of the army, and directed to select a position for the ensuing day's encampment. On the 15th, Major Jackson, Deputy Quartermaster-general, who had gone in front to reconnoitre, fell in with a large village full of inhabitants, who, although rather alarmed on his first approach, were soon re-assured, and promised to remain quietly in their houses with their families and effects.

These proved to be Carians, who are a race totally distinct from the Burmahs, and are the aborigines of the soil. They are solely devoted to

agricultural pursuits, which they are the better enabled to pursue as they choose their villages in remote spots, where they neither encroach on others nor are themselves liable to be molested. Quiet and peaceable in their demeanour, and in the general tenour of their lives, they remain passive spectators of the dissensions which occur between their neighbours, who never call upon them to draw the sword in their aid, although they often oblige them to perform laborious offices in assisting at the construction of stockades and roads. They do not intermarry with the Burmahs, but preserve their race unmixed; and in their dress they differ entirely from the rest of the inhabitants of these countries. They are fair-complexioned, and of a very stout, athletic form; but their features are destitute of beauty, and the custom of tattooing is seldom if ever followed by them. The dress of the males is a smock-frock (similar to that of a waggoner), made of white cotton and ornamented with red stripes; whilst that of the women consists of a petticoat of the same stuff, adorned with festoons of beads, and a short upper vest. Their arms are the spear, sword, and bow and arrow; but these weapons are mostly used against the beasts of the forest. In the evening, twenty villagers marched into camp, bearing with them, as a present for the General, a few fowls, eggs, ducks, and rice; and the next morning, when we arrived and encamped at Cariangoon, where they resided, we found them assembled in their houses, gazing

with astonishment at the novel sight which our appearance offered to them.

The chief of the village, attended by a large portion of the population, advanced to meet Sir A. Campbell; and, squatting on their heels, in a semi-circle, they begged his acceptance of a few fowls and vegetables, as a token of their wish to be on amicable terms with us; and the General, in return, having ordered some rupees to be given them, with an assurance that if they would supply us with cattle and other provisions, every article they brought should be paid for, they went away highly pleased, and shortly returned with fowls and a few buffaloes for sale. The fame of our kindness to the Carians soon spread far and wide, and before evening people from all the adjacent villages came into camp; and a portion of the road we were to pass the ensuing day being in bad order, they offered to send a number of men to assist our pioneers in preparing it. This was a measure we liberally rewarded, as a more favourable opening towards conciliating the disposition of the inhabitants was not likely to present itself; and, as the army preserved the strictest discipline, it seemed likely that we should succeed in our plans.

Cariangoon was but a small village, and its houses were mere hovels raised ten or twelve feet from the ground by long poles, on the summit of which was perched the sole chamber, where the whole family, men, women, children, domestic animals, and

poultry lived promiscuously. These mansions were entered by means of a notched post, instead of steps, and underneath the house revelled, in all the luxury of mud and slime, numerous groups of pigs and ducks.

Contrary to the usual custom of the East, the women did not hide themselves from us; but, after they had satisfied their curiosity, returned to their daily occupations of pounding corn, fetching water, and preparing dinner for the men.

We had expected to meet with some opposition at the fort of Mopie, whither the Maha Silwa had retired with two thousand men; and when we advanced towards it next morning, preparations were made for an assault. However, on approaching nearer, we were informed that the Burmahs had retired; and the Body-guard being sent in pursuit, captured two or three carts, and made some prisoners. From them we learned that the Maha Silwa, upon receiving the first intimation of our approach, had retired that morning with the utmost precipitation. His force had been gradually reduced by desertion, and, when this final dispersion took place, amounted only to five hundred men, of whom not above twenty accompanied their chief during his flight to Zemoh.

Mopie was formerly a Tallien town of considerable importance, but now it contained no inhabitants. It was surrounded by the remains of a lofty brick wall, and a small river, which ran at the base, afforded a plentiful supply of water.

A remarkably handsome bamboo-house had been constructed here for the Maha Bundoolah, who only occupied it one night on his way to Rangoon; and since then it had remained untenanted, in compliance with the Burman code of etiquette, which prohibits an inferior from inhabiting the house intended for his chief. In the plain surrounding Mopie were numerous Carian villages, the inhabitants of which lined the road-side as we passed, and expressed their astonishment at the sight of our guns, by clapping their hands, laughing and shouting. With the exception of these few hamlets, the country appeared to be a perfect desert, mostly under water during the rainy season, and covered with vast and almost impenetrable forests, which were said to be much infested with tigers.

On the 17th we left Mopie, and following the high road which we had now re-entered, encamped at the large but deserted village of Meoundagah, about a mile from the banks of the Lyne river. Here the road crosses the stream to Denobiu; but as the river was not fordable, and that another branch still intervened, which it would be necessary to pass, and as we had, moreover, neither pontoons nor boats, the idea of marching on Denobiu was given up, and Sarawah became our point of concentration.

Lyne (where the head-quarters arrived on the 22d, after marching through a succession of forests) had, at one period, been a town of considerable importance, and even now is of some size. It is the

capital of the district of the same name, which extends from Tantabain to Sounzah, and, during the Tallien dynasty, was a fertile and well-peopled tract, now reduced to a mere wilderness. The town is pleasingly situated on the bank of the river to which it gives its name, whose winding stream, running sometimes diametrically opposite to its natural course, forms innumerable small, but picturesque reaches, encircled by beautifully-wooded banks. The remains of an old fort could be distinctly traced here; like all the Pegue ruins, it was of brick, and had been very lofty.

Here we replenished our stock of provisions for the last time, as the river was not sufficiently deep to admit of boats heavily laden passing higher up; a few, however, succeeded in pushing on as far as Thaboon, whence we should be enabled to move with nearly one month's provision, but after that, all our resources depended on the supplies in charge of General Cotton. On the 24th, we continued our march, and on the 28th, encamped at a well-built town called Sounzah, whence the inhabitants had only that morning fled; here we unexpectedly received some seasonable supplies of cattle from the adjoining Carian villagers, who had now become our firm allies, and in the course of the day some of the Burman inhabitants came in and promised us some buffaloes.

We were now approaching those districts whence the teak wood (for which Pegue is famed) is pro-

cured, and from our camp at Sounzah we could plainly discern the Galadzet mountains, about twenty miles distant, where this valuable tree grows in great abundance, and whence the best kind of wood is derived. The mode of transporting the teak to the lower provinces is very simple, and similar to that practised in most mountainous countries which are contiguous to large rivers.

During the hot season, the trees are felled in the mountains, and after being divested of their branches, are roughly shaped into planks or beams, with a hole at one end, by which they are fastened together and formed into rafts. They are then deposited in the beds of ravines and small streams, which swelling rapidly during the rains, are soon converted into impetuous torrents bearing every thing before them, and thus expeditiously conveying on their surface the wood, which on arriving at the junction of the minor streams with the Irrawaddy, is collected by the proprietors, and thence transmitted in rafts to Rangoon and Bassien. Teak has long been the staple commodity of Ava, and for years past the dock-yards of Calcutta have been supplied by Rangoon to a very great extent. Ships also of eight hundred or one thousand tons burthen have been built at Rangoon; and thirty years since, if Mr. Gibson may be credited, he constructed one of three hundred tons for the Engy Tekein, or Prince Royal, at Lyne, and afterwards floated her down to Rangoon during the rains.

On the 1st of March, after fording the Lyne river at Thaboon, the army arrived at Sarawah, on the banks of the Irrawaddy, and it was impossible to experience more delight than we did on first viewing this superb stream. This may easily be conceived, when it is recollected how long we had been shut up in Rangoon wishing for this event; besides which we had a more cheering prospect before us, as we now entered the cultivated districts, and, consequently, might calculate on obtaining possession of part of the resources of the country, and thereby alleviate our privations, and enable us to move with more efficiency and rapidity. This also was the point where we were to unite with General Cotton, and his arrival was anxiously expected, as every day lost in waiting for him diminished our small stock of provisions, and allowed the enemy time for making preparations to oppose us at Prome.

On approaching Sarawah, a heavy fog prevented the column from being seen by the inhabitants, and only disclosed to their view the cavalry which formed our advanced guard. Upon seeing the latter, they immediately fled, and carrying with them all their moveables, ran to their canoes, and pulled to the opposite shore. By the exertions of Sir A. Campbell, a few individuals were persuaded to stop and receive proclamations, tending to reassure the inhabitants, and induce them to return; but his efforts were, unfortunately, unavailing. The number of those who came back was very limited, and even

they only remained long enough to secure whatever little property they had forgotten in the hurry of their flight.

In a short time, the fog clearing up, enabled us to see an immense crowd of people on the opposite shore, and a number of canoes on the river paddling away from us as fast as possible; but at this moment the rest of our troops becoming visible, the Burmahs instantly fled inland, and proceeded down the river Henzadah, where we could see the spires of numerous gilt pagodas rising above the forest, and glittering in the sun.

Sarawah proved, for a short time, to be the very land of plenty: herds of cattle were feeding in the vicinity of the village, and afforded us a welcome supply; fowls and goats were running about the houses, and in the surrounding little gardens we found various vegetables, which proved most acceptable to our unsophisticated palates; but this did not last long: we too soon found that appearances were deceptive, and were obliged, with renewed disgust, to revert to our former fare, tough buffalo beef.

Our communication with General Cotton had now ceased; but when we were at Lyne, intelligence was received of his having captured Panlang on the 20th, without much opposition; and it was therefore expected he would arrive at Sarawah daily, the force at Denobiu not being supposed capable of impeding the progress of his column: besides which, we were

confidently informed, by some Burmahs who joined us, that Denobiu either was, or would be, evacuated on the approach of the British force.

At Sarawah were many handsome kioums or monasteries, containing large collections of Gaudmas of different sizes and materials: these were ranged on stands richly ornamented with stained glass and gilding, fancifully disposed in several grotesque shapes, and surmounted by canopies, on which the same species of ornament bore a conspicuous part. About the apartments were numerous offerings of the pious, and in one of the houses a book was found, which may be considered of great importance, as showing the estimation in which this nation was held by a very insignificant power in Europe, at a time when we, its immediate neighbours, must have been enveloped in shameful ignorance of every thing concerning it. This was a plain and simple exposition of the tenets of the Christian faith, in the Latin and Burman languages, and printed at the press of the society for the propagation of the true faith at Rome in 1785.

On enquiry I found that about that period some Italian priests were settled near Ava, and taught Latin to several people, amongst others to Mr. Gibson. For many years past no persons of the Roman Catholic persuasion have visited Ava as missionaries, the fall and poverty of that church by the events of the French revolution, and the detention of its venerable pontiff under Napoleon, having of

course prevented the Church of Rome from sending any of its members to disseminate the light of the gospel in these regions; but the Roman Catholic religion is still followed by a few individuals, and is represented by priests of that race, miscalled Portuguese, who from their intermarriage with the natives of India, now retain but little trace of their origin, except the dialect which still remains to them of the language of their forefathers.

In order to save the kioums from spoliation by the camp-followers, sentries were placed over the principal buildings, and we had the satisfaction of leaving them uninjured; but although several of the Poonghis or priests came into our camp, none would re-occupy the kioums whilst we stayed. During the wars between the Burmahs and Peguers, the priests were unmolested by either party, and consequently always remained to guard their tutelar gods; but we always found the kioums deserted until we arrived at Prome. Whether this proceeding may have been caused by fear or by the orders of government is doubtful, but I should think it may rather be attributed to the latter. At Sarawah the chief of a small village in the vicinity came over to us, and proved eventually of much service; and we also heard that the large village of Thaboon, in our rear, had accepted our protection, and thrown off its allegiance to the Burman government. These examples we hoped would be generally followed, particularly as it was said that the chief of the province of Henzadah

Monshoeloo was a man of a tyrannical disposition, and much disliked by the population.

Day after day elapsed, and no intelligence was received of General Cotton, except what we heard from Burmahs who daily came into camp, but whose information was quite contradictory, one saying that Denobiu had been taken, another that it was evacuated, and a third that General Cotton was quite close to us. In the meantime we began to feel rather alarmed at the non-appearance of boats with provisions, as our slender stock was fast consuming, and where or how to replenish it we knew not.

Whilst in this perplexing situation, we heard, on the morning of the 7th, the sound of a distant cannon, and a short time afterwards, a heavy and continued cannonade: it was evidently stationary, and ceased in about an hour, with the exception of a few straggling shots, which lasted till dark: the next morning all was quiet. Our anxiety at this time was very great. There were no appearances of fugitives on the opposite bank, and yet we could not for a moment suppose otherwise than that our troops had been successful. Opinions were, however, divided till the next day, when some Burmahs came in and stated that Denobiu had been captured by the English, and that the Maha Bundoolah had fled to the jungle with a few men, and so badly wounded in the arm, that he was not expected to recover.

The advantage of again advancing before the Burman troops could rally in front of Prome, was obvious to every one; and there being every reason to suppose General Cotton successful, Sir A. Campbell, on the 9th, marched with the first division as far as Mahrangain, leaving Colonel Godwin with the second, to await the arrival of the water-column; and the next day we encamped at Uadeet, on the Irrawaddy, having again forded the Lyne river six miles from Teindoo, where it branches from the Irrawaddy. Uadeet was totally deserted, and in every direction around we could see columns of smoke rising from villages, to which the Burmahs, constant to their system of devastation, had set fire, in order to prevent our deriving any benefit from them. Here we halted on the 11th, and buried Gibson, who had died of cholera, the preceding day. He had made himself very useful, and his loss was difficult to be replaced, as we had no one with us equally well versed in the duplicity and insincerity of the government we were opposed to: at first, doubts were entertained of his sincerity, but latterly we had a better opinion of his fidelity, as he was too clever not to know that the British government was much better able to reward his services than the Burman. During the night of the 10th, a messenger arrived from Colonel Godwin with a despatch from General Cotton, written on a small piece of paper rolled in a quill: the contents were disheartening, being an account of his repulse from Denobiu, and of his having

dropped two miles down the river in expectation of reinforcements.

After leaving Rangoon, Brigadier-general Cotton, with his division, proceeded up the Panlang river, and arrived in the vicinity of that town on the 20th, where he found there were three stockades commanding the passage of the river, and garrisoned by some troops under the Kee Woonghee, who fled from the works at the first discharge, and, consequently, neither party suffered any loss. Some unforeseen circumstance occurring to detain the force, General Cotton did not arrive before Denobiu until the 4th of March, when he summoned the Bundoolah to surrender the forts. The answer was a polite but determined refusal, in which the Burman chief said, that we had hitherto only fought with peasants and Carians, but that now we should have to encounter Burman soldiers. The main work of Denobiu was an oblong square, well stockaded and strengthened with abatis. Five hundred yards lower down the river, was a small and badly-constructed work ; and beyond that again, a strong stockade, surrounding Denobiu pagoda. General Cotton, after reconnoitring the works, wished to attack the main stockade at once ; but Captain Alexander, as appears from the General's report, having represented that, in case this measure was followed, he should require three hundred and fifty men to defend the flotilla, which would have left the remainder of the column a mere handful, General Cotton was reduced to the alternative of

attacking the three stockades successively. On the morning, therefore, of the 7th, he advanced with six hundred men, in two columns, under Colonel O'Donohue and Major Basden, to attack the pagóda stockade, which was carried after a short but determined resistance, the enemy losing four hundred men, killed, wounded, and prisoners.

The general then directed Lieutenant-colonel Mallett, who was left in command at the pagoda, to send two hundred men of the eighty-ninth, under Captain Rose, to storm the second work, covered by our guns. But the party was unfortunately repulsed with the loss of Captains Rose and Cannon, and several men killed; and the enemy, gaining courage by this advantage, brought some guns to bear on the pagoda, and annoyed our troops very much.

General Cotton now finding the enemy so much stronger than he had expected, and not thinking his force adequate to attack the main work, even should he succeed in capturing the small stockade, ordered all the guns to be re-embarked, and evacuated his late conquest that night, having altogether lost five officers, and one hundred and thirty men killed and wounded. The Burman force amounted to fifteen thousand men, with one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and three hundred jingals.

Affairs were in this state when we commenced our retrograde march on Sarawah, where we arrived on the 13th. No time had been lost in collecting all the canoes that were lying deserted on the banks of

the river; and when we entered the town, we found that part of the second division had already crossed.

A casual observer, on looking at the vast body of water we had to pass, without any other means of conveyance than nine small canoes, formed out of the single trunks of trees, and, consequently, not capable of holding above a very few men, would have deemed it utterly impossible to have transported our artillery, cavalry, and commissariat stores to the opposite bank: we had, however, no option, and Sir A. Campbell and Major Jackson, Deputy Quartermaster-general, commenced with indefatigable activity making such preparations as the scanty materials would afford.

Fortunately for us, the Irrawaddy at this season was at its lowest ebb, and at least forty feet below the level of the country; but even now, at the narrowest point, the width of water was six hundred and sixty yards, and the current in the middle of the stream very powerful.

In order to cross our artillery, two canoes were fastened together, on which large beams were bound, so as to form a raft sufficiently strong to support the weight of a gun; and after considerable difficulty, the whole of the ordnance was in this manner safely landed. The commissariat carts were unladen and towed across, the bullocks and horses being tied in equal numbers on each side of the boats, and having their heads supported out of the water, were enabled to swim over with but a very trifling loss;

and as there were very few boatmen, it became necessary to man the canoes with soldiers, who cheerfully performed the arduous task of pulling to and fro: indeed, such was the exertion made, that in five days our force had all crossed the river.

During our stay at Sarawah we contrived to transmit intelligence to General Cotton of our approach, and the probable time we should appear before Denobiu, when he was to move forward and effect a junction with us. This note, like the preceding, was rolled in a quill and given to a Burmah, who undertook to deliver it. His address did him great credit, and he contrived completely to outwit our adversaries; for, leaving Sarawah with a little canoe full of tamarinds, he boldly pulled into the middle of the Burman fleet of war-boats, and there offering his wares for sale, passed himself off in the character of a trader. Not the least suspicion being attached to him, he found no difficulty in dropping down the stream during the night; and after delivering his letter to General Cotton, brought back an answer by land, in which the General stated, that to avoid being constantly annoyed by the Burmahs, he had fallen back ten miles below Denobiu.

A very singular document came into our possession at this time, which afforded a very good proof of the cunning of the enemy. A camp follower of ours who had been taken at Rangoon came into the lines, and said that he had just escaped from Denobiu. But his manner and story exciting suspicion, he was

examined, and a letter found on him addressed to Gibson. It was in the Bundoolah's name, and commenced by stating that his letter had been received, and that he was acting very properly in giving information of the movements of the English, as the king had always behaved to him with great kindness, and conferred many benefits upon him: that the Maha Bundoolah had entirely defeated the naval column of the English; and that he desired Gibson would persuade us to move down to Denobiu in small parties, that we might be served in the same manner!

This extraordinary epistle can only have been intended by the Burmahs to shake our opinion of Gibson's fidelity; at least we viewed it in that light, as it could scarcely be supposed possible that we should have been the dupe of his treachery, when he must have known that the moment it was discovered he would be the first to fall.

The passage of the Irrawaddy was effected without the least opposition from the enemy, a considerable body of whom it was said had assembled at Tombay on the Bassien river, under the orders of the fugitive Kee Woonghee, and Monshoeloo, the chief of Henzadah. As the distance was only twenty miles, Sir A. Campbell conceived the idea of surprising them by a night-march, and sent Lieutenant-colonel Godwin with his Majesty's forty-first, part of the body-guard, and a brigade of guns, for that purpose: it was also thought likely they might communicate with Major Sale, who, after taking Bassien,

which had offered no resistance, was to have moved up the Bassien river and joined us.

At daybreak Colonel Godwin arrived at the village, and found about five hundred Burmahs, who immediately dispersed and fled; the Kee Woonghee had started, and the attempt was foiled: it, however, prevented any force hanging on our rear and flanks, as this body of men never re-assembled.

Henzadah, previous to our arrival, had been a large and populous town of great antiquity and note; but as usual, when we entered it, not a living creature was to be seen. Near it, at Kioumzick, or Convent Stairs, was a superb grove of mangoe, tamarind, and other beautiful trees, under which we observed some handsome and venerable kioums, and near them were many images of Gaudma, of colossal size, made of brick stuccoed over in imitation of marble. One of these, which was upright, stood between thirty and forty feet high; and the hand of another, which I measured, was five feet and a half long. These stupendous relics of idolatry were protected from the weather by a series of five or six roofs tapering gradually to a spire, and having a very beautiful appearance.

The kioums were remarkable for their neatness: surrounded by small gardens, in which many beauteous shrubs were blooming, and containing also the more useful and pretty-leaved papya, the plantain, cocoa-nut, and other fruit-trees, they had all the appearance of comfort, accompanied by simplicity

and cleanliness; and their interior, also, was extremely well arranged, though unoccupied.

Through the two principal streets of Henzadah ran a paved road; and two or three ravines, which intersected the town, were crossed by wooden bridges: on the whole it was really a pleasing spot; but to see it without its inhabitants, and their places usurped by British soldiers, was not certainly placing it in the best point of view. We appeared quite out of character amidst the Burman huts, and our temporary usurpation recalled forcibly to mind those feelings of regret with which one contemplates scenes formerly the abode of quiet and peace, when laid waste and dreary by the merciless ravages of war. All social ties are severed by its influence; and of this I saw a melancholy proof when strolling one evening through the deserted streets of Henzadah. I was sauntering carelessly along on my way from Kioumzick, where I had been examining the religious edifices, when, passing by a neat but apparently empty hut, I heard a groan, and, on listening, was convinced that some unfortunate being inside was suffering great pain. I easily opened the door, and looked into the interior of the room, when I observed in a corner an emaciated old woman stretched on a mat, and apparently at the point of death. The evening was cold, yet she had scarcely any covering; a broken earthen jar, containing a little rice, stood by her side, and appeared, though her only food, to have been untasted: at a short distance

from her was a bowl of water, and when I entered the apartment the poor wretch was making unavailing efforts to reach this, but was so debilitated that she fell back, and with a low moan resumed her recumbent posture. I immediately gave her water, and, my tent not being far distant, brought her some boiled rice; for which the unhappy woman seemed most grateful, and thanked me by repeatedly raising her clasped hands to her forehead,—astonished, no doubt, at receiving attention from a stranger, when her own kindred had left her to die unpitied and disregarded. Three weeks afterwards, we passed through Henzadah on our return from Denobiu, and I made a point of calling to see if the old dame was still alive; but she was not to be found, and no traces of her remained: she had most likely been carried away by her relations.

The news of General Cotton's failure spread like wild-fire all over the country, and we soon perceived the influence it had on the minds of the inhabitants; for, whereas, when we were advancing, numerous Burmahs and Carians offered themselves as guides, we had now scarcely one, the greater part having gone off the moment we retrograded, and the remainder leaving us one by one; but this state of affairs could not continue, as the whole force had now quitted the left bank of the Irrawaddy, and on the 20th, assembled at Henzadah.—The next morning we marched.

At Youngbenzah, where we encamped on the 22d,

we lost all traces of the road, and were, consequently, obliged to employ the whole day in cutting one through the immense reeds with which this part of the country is overgrown.

These cover large tracts of ground, and grow so very close together, that it is impossible to force a passage through them. They are sometimes twenty feet high; and, consequently, when once a defile of this kind is entered, there is no means of diverging either to the right or left. The reeds being quite parched by the sun, ignite with the greatest rapidity, and are often set on fire with the friction occasioned by their waving to and fro when agitated by the wind.

We repeatedly saw the country, for a great distance, in flames, and occasionally approached so close to them, that our ammunition-waggons have not been at all in safety. The crackling noise the reeds make when burning, the volumes of flame and smoke which are excited by the breeze, and the rapidity with which the fire extends its dominion, filling the air with sparks, contribute to render the situation of a near spectator far from agreeable. We, however, though detained the next day with one of these conflagrations quite close to us, succeeded in escaping without any accident.

At length, on the 24th, from the bank of the river at Koungshah, we could plainly see Denobiu, its white pagoda being a very conspicuous object; but we were still at least five miles distant. Our arrival here seemed to be the signal of flight for all those

whom idleness, curiosity, or the desire of gain, had assembled round the fort; and we had shown ourselves but a very short time, before the river was literally crowded with boats, among which we now and then could see a gilt war-boat and chattah passing from one bank to the other.

Availing themselves of the width of the stream, and of numerous islands which partly concealed them, these fugitives all passed us without interruption, except from four shotted guns, which we fired to intimate our approach to General Cotton, whom we hoped to unite with next day, the army for some time having been on short allowance, and the utmost economy only enabling us to keep provisions sufficient for two days longer.

At day-break, on the morning of the 25th of March, the army advanced, and on debouching from a grove of plantain-trees, we found ourselves in front of Denobiu.

CHAPTER VIII.

Encamp before Denobiu—War-boats—Sortie from the Fort—Communicate with General Cotton—He joins us 28th—Elephants charged by the Body-guard—Death of the Bundoolah, and evacuation of Denobiu, 2d of April—We leave Denobiu and advance, 4th of April—Letter from the Attweynwoon—Pass the Rapids—The army enters Prome 25th of April—Situation of the town—The inhabitants join us—Retreat of Prince Sarawaddy, and dispersion of his force—War-boats captured.

Denobiu Stockade formed an oblong square, one thousand yards long and five hundred broad, built on the ramparts of an old Pegue fort. On three sides the country was perfectly level, and had been carefully cleared for half a mile, so as to afford a range for the artillery. The river washed the east side of the fort, which was further defended by a formidable battery; and in front of each gate were ravelins or demilunes, which formed excellent flank defences. A little above the fort, the river was divided by a small island, and there the war-boats, seventeen in number, had taken post, and cannonaded our line as it passed one or two exposed points.

The regularity with which the battlements of the fort were built, gave it all the appearance of an ancient fortification: at every twenty yards stood a shed covering a gun; and at the four corners of the work were small edifices with spiral roofs, under which

numerous gilt chattahs were discernible. The ramparts were crowded with men, armed with spears, muskets, and bayonets; and the greatest bustle seemed to pervade the interior of the work, where we soon perceived numbers of people busily employed in unroofing the houses, in order to prevent the thatch being fired by our missiles.

In the middle of the fort was the Bundoolah's house, and near it, on a tall flag-staff, waved the Burman colours.

In order to make a reconnoissance of the works, Sir A. Campbell proceeded with part of the force for some distance down the west face; and as he passed along, the fort suddenly opened a fire from thirty pieces of cannon, which did no harm, though well directed, and principally at the cavalry. To show them we were not idle, the rocket-battery was directed to fire on an angle where a number of chieftains were assembled; but, unfortunately, the whole of the rockets exploded the moment they were ignited, blowing the tubes to pieces, and scattering the fragments of their shells among our troops in every direction, but, by a miracle, not injuring any one. This was a very annoying discovery, and their failure was attributed to the exposure to the sun, which had rendered them so dry, that the motion of carrying them must have pulverized the composition. In the course of a day or two, Captain Graham remedied this accident, and the rockets subsequently were of much service.

Whilst our troops were waiting until their ground of encampment should be assigned them, a body of Cassay horse, about two hundred strong, dashed out of the fort. A few of their number, who appeared to be of high rank, galloped up quite close to the thirty-eighth regiment, and taking cover behind some trees, appeared to be examining our position, whilst one richer dressed than the rest dashed past our front, waving his spear, and exhorting his men to follow his example: a few shots, however, kept them back, and having completed their reconnoissance, they retired.

The position in which we were obliged to pitch our camp, was not more than one thousand yards from the stockade; and, consequently, completely within range of the enemy's batteries: we fronted the west face, our left rested on the river, and our right was necessarily thrown *en l'air*, parallel to Denobiu, there being no support for it, if we may except a wood, which, however, offered more facilities to the enemy than to us. A deep ravine ran from our right to within one hundred yards of the fort, and our rear was partially defended by a ravine of some depth; but still the position was very weak to the right, where it might easily be turned.

Thus, instead of being able to invest Denobiu, we could, with difficulty, watch one face; and from the small number of our European troops, it became absolutely necessary to attack it in form, and avail ourselves of the superiority of our artillery, the abatis

and ditch being so formidable, that we should have suffered very severely by a storm,—a loss which now, at the opening of the campaign, could be but ill afforded.

On General Cotton all our hopes now rested: he had been ordered to send for battering-guns and mortars, and a reinforcement from His Majesty's forty-fifth regiment (which had just arrived at Rangoon). Famine was staring us in the face, and yet not a sign of his column was visible; and from the silence of the enemy's guns at the pagoda, we concluded he could not be very near: it was, however, likely that the cannonading, which was incessant from the fort, would inform him of our arrival.

In the evening we were amused by a very novel sight. Seventeen gilt war-boats, each with a chief and gilt chattah, and carrying from fifty to eighty men, all uniformly dressed in black jackets and red head-dresses, and mounting a piece of heavy ordnance, pulled from under the walls of the fort, the crews singing their boat-song, in chorus, as they simultaneously dipped their oars in the water. When they arrived within three hundred yards of our camp, each boat, in succession, fired its gun, and then dropped a little way down to reload; but some of the horse-artillery and galloper-guns of the Body-guard being turned against them with much effect, they were obliged to give way to the superiority of our fire, and retired

Fatigued with the exertions of the day, the whole

force had fallen into a profound sleep; not a sound was heard, and the most uninterrupted silence had succeeded the bustle and animation of the morning; the fort had also ceased its fire, and this sudden calmness, when two hostile armies were so close to each other, seemed to cover some design the enemy had in view.

Our pickets were strong and well posted; the moon shone with the greatest splendour, and the troops were all dressed and ready to assemble at a minute's warning: we, therefore, retired securely to rest; but at nine o'clock the moon set.

That very moment about twenty or thirty shots, fired by the picket on the right, and which was instantly driven in, were the signal for a shout and yell from an immense body of Burmahs, who were pressing on the right of the line, and commenced a sharp fire; and at the same instant shots were heard in every part of our camp, but the right was evidently the point of attack. There his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, rushing half asleep from their tents, drew up in line, having been judiciously thrown back *en potence*, so as to cover our exposed flank; and kneeling down, awaited till the near approach of the enemy, and the light of the picket-house in flames, would enable them to fire with effect. The Burmahs advanced to within twenty or thirty yards, when they were driven back by some well-directed vollies from the thirty-eighth and twenty-sixth Madras Native infantry. Meanwhile our artillery, which had

been sent to the most exposed parts of the camp, continued firing grape: occasionally the air would be illumined by the brilliant train of the Congreve rockets; and to our great delight we thought we saw some shells thrown below Denobiu, in the direction General Cotton was expected to arrive. Still the Burmahs continued their howls and exhortations to advance, apparently without effect; as, after exchanging a few more shots, they retired, and all was again silent.

This sortie was not attended with much loss to either party: we lost a few killed and wounded, and the Burmahs also suffered slightly; it, however, gave no mean idea of the talents of the Maha Bundoolah, that chief having instantly perceived our weakest point, and attempted to avail himself of it. If his troops had seconded him, they might have created some confusion in our ranks, for night-attacks are always favourable to those who have the most local knowledge, as otherwise it is impossible to prevent much confusion and uncertainty; besides which, the disadvantages to the attacked are great, as they cannot strengthen one point without weakening another, which might equally become exposed to danger. From the moment this affair commenced, the noise of tomtoms and drums, and the repeated sounding of gongs in the fort was incessant, and was meant, I suppose, for the purpose of exciting and encouraging the combatants.

The north-west angle being considered the most

assailable part of the fortifications, on the night of the 26th a working party, protected by a regiment, marched, under cover of the ravine, close to the fort, where an old black pagoda, at about three hundred yards' distance, presented a good spot whence to commence throwing up the trenches and batteries, which it was intended should be mounted with field-pieces, to enfilade the ramparts until the heavy guns arrived. Our last day's provisions were now expended, and the flotilla not appearing, Sir A. Campbell had no option but to abandon the position we occupied, and move below Denobiu, or try some means of communicating with it, and ordering that column to advance.

For this purpose, Major Jackson received instructions to proceed with one hundred men of his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, one hundred of the forty-third Madras Native infantry, and some cavalry, to the spot where the fleet was said to be (six miles distant), and direct its immediate advance. He started on the 26th, and reached the flotilla without interruption; when, having fulfilled the purport of his mission, he recommenced his march home. Scarcely had his rear entered the jungle, when it was assailed on every side by a fire of musketry, and forced to retire into the plain, where he formed with regularity and showed so good a front, that the enemy allowed him to continue his retreat on the boats without further molestation. There he was obliged to embark and come up on the following day.

The force sent by the Bundoolah to form this attack consisted of two thousand musketeers, nine elephants, and fifty cavalry under Keoukeoungbo, the chief who repelled General Cotton's attack. The plan was well concerted, and they no doubt would have succeeded in cutting off the whole party, had the attack been delayed until the detachment was more entangled in the jungle.

The morning of the 27th was ushered in by a very brilliant sight: on the river we saw our flotilla, led by the steam-boat, standing up the stream with a fair breeze, and as it passed along returning the fire of the fort, which, on the water-side, was enveloped in smoke, no less than fifty pieces of cannon having opened on the boats. On the north side, our artillery and the fort were rapidly exchanging shots; and to the east, the Maha Bundoolah prepared a sally on the trenches, and formed a dense column of men, in rear of seventeen elephants drawn up in line and supported by cavalry. The elephants carried each five or six men armed with muskets and jingals, and advanced steadily to the trenches; but Captain Lumsden, by the excellent fire of his horse-artillery, checked their advance, and then they moved towards camp, where the whole line was drawn out ready to receive them. Seeing this movement, Sir A. Campbell directed Captain Sneyd with the Body-guard to charge; a measure which was carried into effect with the greatest success and gallantry. The

elephants were dispersed and put to flight, with the loss of all their riders and a chief of rank: the Cassay horse shared the same fate; and the infantry then re-entered the fort.

This charge was one of the prettiest affairs possible, and must have given the Burmahs a high opinion of the superiority of our cavalry; indeed, after this time we were no more molested by sorties. The Bundoolah had now lost the only opportunity of acting offensively to advantage; for our troops having united, his chance of injuring us was lost.

The steam-boat, under Captain Alexander, also conspicuously signalized itself to-day, by capturing thirteen out of the seventeen war-boats, after a very long chase, the crews being so completely exhausted, that they were obliged to jump overboard and abandon their boats.

The junction with General Cotton put us in possession of everything we had previously required. Mortars were landed and immediately placed in battery, eighteen and twenty-four pounders were also moved to the trenches, and on the 2nd of April it was supposed the assault would take place: in the interim, the Burmahs made two or three futile night-attacks on the trenches, and we kept a constant fire of mortars and rockets. The eventful day arrived, and the roar of our batteries commenced, but to our astonishment was scarcely answered by the fort; and our surprise was still greater when some Burmahs,

running into camp, informed us that Denobiu had been evacuated during the night, in consequence of the death of the Maha Bundoolah, who, as it afterwards appeared, had been struck on the preceding day by the fragment of a shell, which almost instantly terminated his existence; and this event being rumoured through the fort, the Burmahs refused to obey his brother (an Attweynwoon), but resolved to retire that night. This, from the great extent of their works, they were enabled to effect without our observation, taking with them the ashes of their chief, whose body had been burned.

The loss the Burman government suffered by the death of the Bundoolah was greater than could ever be regained. His talents were undoubted: he was the only man in the country who could keep an army together; and although his discipline was enforced by acts of tyranny and injustice, it may, perhaps, be excusable in a man who had no other remedy, and on whom the whole trust and confidence of the court of Ava reposed. He was the soul of the war-faction, and, of course, would never have deserted that cause he had so earnestly promoted; and, as he was both feared and respected, his influence had no bounds.

His bravery and the consistency of his conduct even gained him our esteem; and the orders which he had issued respecting the treatment of prisoners divested his character of its ferocity, and induced a

belief that he possessed more civilized ideas than the generality of his countrymen. To the peasantry, during this war, he had behaved most tyrannically, by levying contributions, and forcing them to join the army; and the intelligence of his death consequently diffused universal satisfaction: but at court very different feelings were expressed; it was felt that the empire had lost the only prop likely to sustain its falling fortunes, and the consternation consequently was very great.

The account of this event was transmitted to the king in a letter from the Prince of Sarawaddy, who, commencing with a long preamble about the extraordinary precision of the English artillery, the king flew into a violent rage, and said, "What! can my brother find nothing to write about, but praises of the rebel strangers?" On continuing the perusal, he found it contained the intimation of the Bundoolah's death, and fall of Denobiu, and the news so much affected him, that he shut himself up in his palace, and would not communicate with any one for many days.

A proof of the determined character of the Bundoolah, may be gathered from the following anecdote. When we entered Denobiu, a basket, containing the head of a man, was found tied to one of the guns in the water-battery. This was said to have appertained to one of their artillerymen, who, having seen all the men at a gun killed or wounded

by one of our discharges, had shown great unwillingness to supply their place, which the Bundoolah observing, he instantly ordered his head to be struck off. This example had the desired effect, and the gun was again manned.

After General Cotton's unsuccessful attack, a very gross attempt was made by the Bundoolah to outwit him. He sent down a small canoe containing two or three Burmahs, who professed themselves deputed by some of the principal chiefs in Denobiu to inform the General, that if he would come up and attack the stockade on a certain day, they would rise in his favour, and, setting fire to the houses inside, so distract the attention of the enemy, that he would experience but little difficulty in getting in. This shallow artifice was easily seen through, and before the messengers departed full proof was obtained of the real object of the mission. One of the Burmahs struck the fancy of a jolly tar, who was present, and either from goodnature or mere frolic, went up to him and said, "Jack, will you drink a glass of grog?" when to the astonishment of all the spectators, the Burmah answered in capital English, "No, I thank you, Sir." —This immediately led to his apprehension, when he confessed that he had been educated by one of the king's linguists, and had acquired considerable knowledge of the English language; the Bundoolah therefore desired him, on this occasion, to accompany the other Burmahs to the English fleet, and

while seemingly inattentive, gather all the intelligence he could from the conversation of the bystanders. His life was spared, and he subsequently was taken into the service of Sir A. Campbell, as interpreter, whence he deserted at Melloon.

The fall of Denobiu placed us in possession of one hundred and forty pieces of cannon, two hundred and sixty-nine jingals, a magazine full of gunpowder, two immense granaries of rice, and a quantity of shot, besides forty war-boats, and a number of other boats of different kinds. About three hundred men, who were too badly wounded to make their escape, had been left behind, and being collected by us, had their wounds dressed, and every assistance afforded them which our limited means would admit.

The total loss of the enemy was about eight hundred; ours, including the action of the 7th, amounted to seven officers and two hundred and thirty men, killed and wounded. Had we stormed, the loss must have been great, as the abatis and ditch at Denobiu were most formidable obstacles to surmount.

The Burmahs had departed in such a hurry, that they left their prisoners behind, and amongst these we found some of the Ramoo people, and a soldier who had been captured on the 26th. When taken, he was stripped of his clothes, but by the Bundoolah's order they were returned to him, and he was afterwards confined in a hole under ground, intended as a bomb proof, where he was principally

indebted for sustenance to the charity of an old woman.

The campaign was far from terminated by the capture of Denobiu, as the enemy had a considerable force at Prome, which place had been fortified; and eight thousand of the select troops from Bundoolah's army were retiring upon it. The prince of Sarawaddy also had taken up a position near Eagain with a considerable body of men, but it was supposed would fall back on Prome after ravaging the country we had to march through, and we therefore did not expect any opposition until we reached that ancient city.

Twenty-seven elephants and some cattle lately arrived from Bengal, enabled another column, composed of His Majesty's royal regiment, and twenty-eighth Madras Native infantry, under Brigadier M'Creagh, to start from Rangoon, and these were directed to wait for us at Sarawah. The eighteenth Madras Native infantry also was ordered up from Panlang, and we therefore should have a very considerable force if we again met the enemy. The Madras European regiment, and twenty-second Native infantry, were left in garrison at Denobiu, it being considered a very good central post to secure the safe navigation of the river; and having rested only one day, we recommenced our march on the night of the 4th of April, with renewed alacrity and spirit.

The army was obliged to halt at Youngbenzah, from the circumstance of the grass and reeds having taken fire on each side of the road through which the baggage was passing, and thus obliging a great portion to wait until the violence of the flames had subsided, or they changed their direction.

The fear and imbecility with which that noble animal the horse is seized, when exposed to danger from fire, was exemplified on this occasion, by an officer's charger, which became so completely stupified, on the approach of the flames, that it was impossible to move him, and he therefore soon perished.

Sir A. Campbell, pushing on with his troops as rapidly as circumstances would admit, arrived at Sarawah on the 7th, and the next day Brigadier M'Creagh joined with his column, making a welcome addition to our force, of one thousand men. The army having all re-crossed the Irrawaddy without accident, we again moved in advance, and reached Uadeet on the 14th, where, on examination, Gibson's grave was found opened, and the body taken out; and as the flotilla when at Denobiu had seen a large body floating down, fastened on a plank, it is most likely that it was his corpse.

This extraordinary idea of disinterring the dead, can only be accounted for by supposing the Burmahs fancied we were in the habit of burying treasure with our deceased friends. In Arracan this practice was

carried to such an extent, that it was impossible to prevent the graves being opened, and the bones strewed about even so long as twelve months after their interment. In Ava however, with the exception of this, and one or two other instances, where the corpses of our soldiers killed in action have been dug up, in order to glut the vengeance of the vanquished, we had no occasion to complain of any insult being offered to our dead.

The country, until we approached Eagain, was wild, uncultivated, and deserted. Now and then we passed an empty village half burnt, and the vicinity still haunted by a host of pariah dogs, looking in vain for their accustomed food. Every other species of domestic animal had been carefully driven away; and it was evident the Burman chiefs had adopted a very efficient system of defence, in thus rendering the country a desert as we advanced, in order to deprive us of resources.

Mengie, near Eagain, was the head-quarters of the Prince of Sarawaddy, and a large stockade had been marked out, and partially completed. When, however, his Highness heard of our rapid advance, he abandoned this position, first burning the handsome house he inhabited, that it might not be polluted by our residence.

For three miles previous to entering Mengie, we marched under a superb grove of mangoe trees, whose dense foliage completely sheltered us from the sun, innumerable clusters of blossoms and fruit

being upon the boughs, but they were, unfortunately, not sufficiently ripe to afford us any refreshment after our hot, dusty march. Leaving Mengie, we continued advancing on the banks of the Irrawaddy, sometimes striking a little inland, but always encamping near the river, in consequence of the scarcity of water at this season of the year, and to keep up the communication with our boats, which made but slow progress up the stream, either by sailing or tracking along shore.

On the 18th we encamped at Singoon, and having lost the road, the pioneers, next day, were obliged to cut an opening through the reeds and jungle for more than four miles. Indeed, we sometimes had no little difficulty in tracing the roads, as in some parts of the country, between which but little intercourse took place, the rapidity of the vegetation soon covered the pathways from view. A good deal of interest was excited when we were encamped at Cuddadoon, on the 19th, by the arrival of a communication from the Attweynwoon, who commanded at Prome, written professedly with the authority and sanction of the government.

The bearer of it was a soldier of His Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, who had been taken prisoner at Lyne, and with him came some Burmahs.

The letter commenced, as usual, with expressions of regret that war should have taken place between the two nations, and thus continued:—"From the creation of the world, the two governments have

lived together in peace and amity, and have never before been engaged in war, or had any disputes, living as it were in unison, and commercial intercourse constantly subsisting between them.

"In the year 1185*, in consequence of the matter arising from the conduct of a certain paltry chief, war commenced, and has lasted upwards of twelve months, occasioning much bloodshed and loss of lives to the armies of both nations.

"These two nations being both great and powerful, it would be highly desirable a communication should be opened between them, that their people may again enjoy the blessings of peace, from which happiness must accrue to their subjects; and the chiefs, through whose means these desirable objects can be obtained, would be held and considered to be highly enlightened, and to have rendered especial service to their respective states.

"For this purpose, we have sent William James, a British soldier, and two Kalassies, taken prisoners by us, with two soldiers of the state, to deliver this, and hope that no delay will occur to prevent a speedy reply being given to this communication."

This appeared so very like a wish to negociate, that some hopes were entertained of an early peace; but one clause in the letter savoured so much of a *ruse de guerre*, that implicit faith could not be placed in these protestations: it was, that Sir A. Campbell should halt his army, and not approach nearer Prome.

* Burman Calendar.

This the General, in reply, stated he could not accede to, but in every other respect he was perfectly willing to enter into a negociation, and the next day the Burmahs were sent back to their camp.

On the 20th, we reached Tirroup Moh, where, for the first time, we found ourselves in the vicinity of hilly ground. The change to the eye was very pleasing, and the Arracan mountains had a fine appearance in the western horizon, whence a succession of lower ranges, covered with wood, came gradually sloping down to the river's edge. The next day, at Shain Yooah, the scenery was still more enlivening. We were encamped in a plain, formed by a semicircle of small hills, covered with the broad-leafed teak-tree; under the river's bank was a part of the flotilla, whilst the rest, decorated with their colours, formed a line across the stream from shore to shore; and in the fore-ground, soldiers, sailors, and servants of different nations, the appearance of the camp, and all its attendant bustle and life, finished a landscape, which would have been worthy the pencil of a superior artist. About two miles beyond this, a bluff and steep point of land, surmounted by a pagoda, pointed out the position of the Rapids of the Irrawaddy. These are caused by the main branch of the river being compressed to the width of four hundred yards, by the abruptness of the hills, which, in one spot, present a perpendicular cliff to the river; under this, ranged in a line a little above the

water's edge, are a number of niches cut in the face of the rock, each containing an image of Gaudma, richly gilt or painted, and strangely contrasting with the native grandeur of the precipice. Two or three statues of Gaudma, of colossal size, could be seen partly hidden by the luxuriant foliage, which jutting out of the sides of the rock, and overhanging the torrent, was entwined and interlaced with a variety of creeping plants, forming a sort of rustic canopy over the heads of these sylvan deities.

At this period, the Rapids did not present any great difficulties to our fleet, but during the rainy season the torrent rushes down with great rapidity. Opposite to them was the town of Younzeah, a very pretty spot, and embellished with the palmyra and tamarind tree; there also sat a huge image of the deity, whose reign on earth seemed, however, very precarious, as the river was fast destroying the bank on which he had been placed. Thence to Prome, the river's bank on either side was diversified with small villages, but all deserted.

It was singular that we had not yet received any intelligence of the capture of Arracan, on which General Morrison was advancing; but as our attempts to open a communication with him had proved abortive, it might be fairly supposed he had been equally unlucky: we, however, daily expected to hear of his arrival at Sembeghween on the Irrawaddy, about one hundred miles above Prome. We had tried to send General Morrison a letter from

Uadeet before we retrograded, and the messenger, a fine young Burmah, received a considerable sum in advance, and the promise of double should he succeed in his mission. After being repeatedly arrested and searched, he at last reached Prome, when finding that to proceed further on his journey was quite impossible, he returned to our camp, and bringing back the money and the letter, said, "I cannot succeed in what I have undertaken; take back, therefore, your letter and your money." Such real honesty and nobleness of character is rarely to be met with, and there are many even in our fortunate land who might take a lesson from this uncivilized Burmah. It may be unnecessary to add that he was not deprived of his well-earned pittance.

In a couple of days another letter was received from the Attweynwoon, requesting the general to halt outside of Prome; but the occupation of that city being considered a *sine qua non*, this, of course, met with no better success than the former application; particularly as we were now within one day's march of the town, the walls of which could be plainly perceived from our camp at Pioutzai, where we arrived on the 24th of April. On our road we passed the once famous town of Shoedoung Mew, where the remains of a brick fort still existed. This place in other days carried on a considerable manufacture of cloths, but now it was quite deserted; a great portion of the inhabitants having been driven up the river by the

Burman chieftains. On the opposite bank, extending nearly three miles, was the town of Padaong Mew, and there some of the population still remained.

On the 25th every preparation was made for an attack on Prome*; the flotilla was directed to advance, and the land-column at the same time moved forward by the bank of the river, through a succession of defiles and strongly-intrenched ground, which might have impeded our march very much had the enemy defended them. Every work, fortunately, was evacuated; and when we occasionally caught a glimpse of Prome, columns of smoke could be seen issuing from the stockade, whilst on each side of our road the smoking remains of the houses indicated that the Burmahs had but lately retired, after destroying the villages, and had most likely destined Prome to share the same fate. This suspicion was soon confirmed by the arrival of the messenger we had despatched the preceding day with the answer to the Attweynwoon, but who, on entering Prome, found the town deserted except by a few stragglers of the rear-guard, who were plundering what the rapaciousness of their colleagues had overlooked. The town and part of the stockade were still in flames when we entered, and about a quarter of the houses, and a quantity of grain, had already fallen a prey to them; but with some exertion we succeeded in saving the remainder.

* Prome, by the Burmahs, is mostly called Peeaye Mew, and sometimes Pee.

To our great satisfaction, we met several Burmahs on the road-side and in the town, and we had not arrived many hours, before a great number flocked in, and demanded passes and protection for their families and property. These were immediately granted; guards were placed over the principal religious edifices to preserve them; and in order to show the inhabitants that we wished to afford them every facility for rebuilding their houses, steps were taken to move the whole force outside the town, leaving merely a native regiment within its walls.

Our first feeling on occupying Prome was that of disappointment. We had heard so much of it for the last year, that we had formed in imagination the most glowing idea of its beauty and splendour, which was very soon damped when we saw the town without any houses save those of its former garrison, and a few miserable sheds scarcely good enough for a bivouac. The unfortunate inhabitants appeared to have been expelled, and the places usurped by the domineering soldiery, who, throughout the war, had rendered themselves detested by the peasantry, from their licentious and overbearing conduct.

The second glance at Prome was far more favourable; and before many days the appearance of the town was much improved. It is built on the left bank of the Irrawaddy, and surrounded by the remains of a brick wall, outside of which the Burmahs had erected a very fine teak-wood stockade, further defended by a wide ditch, or rather swamp, crossed

by substantial wooden bridges. To the southward, at a short distance from the walls, runs a range of small but very steep hills, surmounted by pagodas, and, in the present instance, carefully fortified and mounted with artillery; and on one of these is the principal temple of Prome, the Shoé Shando Prah, which, rearing its golden spire from amidst numerous minor pagodas, and surrounded by the most brilliant foliage, among which the delicate tamarind-tree assumes the most conspicuous place, is an object well deserving the admiration of a painter. At its foot are many handsome kioums; and two large suburbs of Prome, Shando-Yat and Neingian, extend for a considerable distance in this direction. To the west of the town the Nowwein river unites with the Irrawaddy, having on its banks a village bearing the same name; and, in the plain around, gardens, rice-fields, and verdure, attest the fertility of the soil.

On the opposite bank of the Irrawaddy, here nearly two miles wide, an abrupt range of hills, covered with foliage, reaches down to the water's brink, and, at five miles distance, stretches boldly into the stream opposite the heights of Napadee, diminishing the width of the river to eight hundred yards. To the west, the Arracan mountains can be seen in the horizon, lifting their blue peaks into the clouds; and to the east the eye glances over a fine level plain, several miles in extent, richly cultivated, and studded

with groves of trees and pagodas, indicative of the site of villages.

On the 26th the troops marched out of Prome, and were encamped in the suburbs, until houses could be erected for them; and this move was the immediate signal for the return of the inhabitants, who now, with their waggons and cattle, came in daily, and soon repeopled the desert city.

The Burman army, in the hurry of its retreat, left one hundred pieces of cannon mounted on the walls of the town and outworks, and a considerable quantity of powder and military stores in the arsenal. In the latter a fire had been lighted; and Sir A. Campbell, on entering it, desired an artillery officer to take possession of the building for our stores. The fire was immediately extinguished, and, on examination, proved to have been close to two hundred barrels of gunpowder, which, by a miracle, had not communicated with it, or a great part of our troops would have been overwhelmed. In the granaries which had escaped the flames, sufficient rice was found to last the army for a year, and, I need not add, was a welcome acquisition.

We now had an opportunity of ascertaining beyond doubt that the communications received from the Attweynwoon were merely for the purpose of lulling our vigilance, until he should have received sufficient reinforcements to enable him to oppose us at Prome.

When the Prince of Sarawaddy heard of our advance from Sarawah, he immediately fell back from Prome, having with him thirty guns, which he buried; but finding that a reinforcement was on its way from Ava, he sent the letters before alluded to, in concert with the Attweynwoon, hoping we should halt. The day after we entered Prome, six thousand musketeers arrived within thirty miles of it, and joined the prince. On leaving Ava, this reinforcement amounted to ten thousand men, and had been encouraged by the king to do their duty. Each man received one hundred ticals*, and they were exhorted by soothsayers either to conquer or die in the service of their country; but no Spartan courage warmed their breasts, more than four thousand having deserted during the short time they were coming down. On receiving intimation that our boats were advancing up the river, the prince, with his force, retired to Meeayday, where he is said to have declared that it was quite useless prolonging hostilities with the British; that he had often written to the king to that effect, but was certain that his letters were intercepted by Menzaghee, the queen's brother; and that he would, now, personally inform his royal brother of the ill success of his arms, and impress him with the necessity of making peace. In pursuance of this resolution, he directed his force to divide itself into small parties, for the purpose of ravaging the country, and preventing the inhabitants joining us; and after adopting this measure, he pro-

* Twelve Pounds.

ceeded towards Ava, with the principal chieftains, leaving us in peaceable possession of the kingdom of Pegue, and without any force to oppose our advance, had such a measure been practicable; but to us it was out of the question, as the rains were daily expected to commence, and we had not sufficient provisions.

However, on the 27th, the men-of-war boats, under Lieutenant Wilkinson, proceeded up the river as far as Meeayday, having, in their way, captured eight war-boats, three others laden with ammunition, and thirteen guns, and liberated about three thousand canoes' full of people, whom the Burman troops were driving before them, and who gladly availed themselves of this opportunity of returning to their habitations at Prome, and other towns on the bank of the river.

CHAPTER IX.

Musghi of Prome joins us—Colonel Godwin sent to Tongho—Army cantonned—The Burman Court tries to raise another Army—General Morrison takes Arracan 1st of April—Terreeketteree, or Issay Mew—Shoé Shando Pagoda—Festival Days—Burman Women—Their Occupations—Description of Dress and Appearance—Dress of the Men—Wrestling—Boxing—Game at Ball—Musical Instruments—The Patola—Songs—Plays and Dancing—Gambling—Marriage Ceremony—Ideas of Medicine and Surgery—Burial of the Dead, and Embalming.

No sooner was it known that the British army had taken up its quarters at Prome, and thereby prevented the intrusion of any Burman force to the southern districts, than the Musghi, or civil magistrate of the city, came in and resumed his official functions; and his example was followed by the submission of the towns to our rear. The chiefs of Keangain Padaong, Kanoung, and Meahoon, all acknowledged our authority; and rebuilding their devastated villages, soon replaced them on the same peaceful footing as before the war. Thus, in a very short time, our situation underwent a desirable change, and we found ourselves considered in the most amicable light by the whole population of Pegue, who furnished us with boats to bring up our provisions from Rangoon, and also supplied our market with every thing the country afforded. Finding that, although conquerors, we neither tyrannized over them, nor

demanded contributions and subsidies, they soon discriminated betwixt our mode of government and that of their own court; and the comparison being considerably in our favour, tended much to consolidate and cement our rising friendship.

As a proof of his sincerity, the Musghi of Prome brought into us nine elephants, the property of the Burman government; and a few days afterwards, Monshoeloo, the chief of Henzadah, delivered himself up, with all the arms possessed by his followers.

He said he had fought for his country as long as there were any hopes of ultimate success, but that now further exertion would be useless. When we were approaching Denobiu, he begged the Kee Woonghee to authorize him to attack the forty-seventh regiment, which was detached at Henzadah, and after much pressing, received permission to do so, but with a caution from the old chief to take care and not go too near, for that the English were terrible people! Sir A. Campbell gave him the government of Pathein on Bassien.

In order fully to tranquillize the minds of the people, and to clear our front from the predatory bands of the Burmahs, as well as to procure cattle for the army, Sir A. Campbell sent Colonel Godwin with the flank companies of the force, a troop of the body-guard, and some guns, towards Tongho, a large fortified city, situated inland, due east from Prome, and forming the frontier town of Pegue. In case the road proved passable, the Colonel was

directed to occupy that town; but the contrary being the case, he gave up the attempt of moving further in that direction, and taking a circular route, marched on Meeayday, which he found destroyed, and then returned to Prome, bringing with him five hundred head of cattle, purchased from the villagers. At this time we also received intelligence that a large gang of people from the Sarawaddy districts, with a caravan of three hundred carts, were plundering the inhabitants as they passed along. They were overtaken and brought in by Captain Sneyd, with the Body-guard, and from them some more cattle was obtained, after which they were allowed to depart.

By the middle of June, the whole army was comfortably hutted in commodious airy buildings, in the Burman style, and the officers had severally built small houses, and made themselves as snug as circumstances would admit, so that now the lately deserted Prome bore the appearance of a large and populous town. The streets had been cleared from the rubbish, and newly "Macadamized;" houses daily sprung up in every direction; a large and well-supplied bazaar was soon formed, at which all the female part of the population presented itself with fruit, fish, rice, and vegetables, for sale; a number of Burman shops for retailing silks and other produce of the country were opened; and religion, unmolested, resumed its usual sway; the population of Prome

flocking, in holiday dresses on festival days, to the Shoé Shando, quite reckless now of the presence of the strangers.

Whilst every thing was succeeding thus prosperously with the British army, the situation of the court of Ava was far from enviable. Distrust had there established its sway, and both the king and his ministers seemed mutually afraid of each other; appointments were made and cancelled in a breath; no unanimity existed, and, as may be supposed, the sword of the executioner was not idle. The first victim to royal vengeance was the Maha Bundoolah's brother, who lost his head for not having defended Denobiu after the death of that chief, and his property was confiscated to the crown. The next that suffered was the commander-in-chief, Namine, who, being suspected of entertaining a wish to favour the British, was immediately seized and executed, and his place filled up by young prince Memiaboo, the king's half-brother.

No better proof can be adduced of the terror in which the Government of Ava was held by its supporters, than the circumstance that none of the chiefs who had been unsuccessfully engaged against us dared to present themselves before the king, but remained with the handful of adherents who still followed their fortunes at Melloon, Patnagoh and Chalain, where they waited to see what new measures the court would pursue to raise a fresh army; a trans-

action more difficult now than ever, as we had wrested from them one of their most productive sources of conscription, the kingdom of Pegue.

In order to supply this deficiency, orders were issued to the Chobwahs of the Shaan provinces to attend with all their fighting men, and assist in the defence of the throne. Rewards as high as 150 ticals* each man were offered, to induce the inhabitants to enrol themselves under the banners of the empire, and this the Golden Foot deigned to pay from his own treasury. Hitherto, to give a reward to the soldiers was unheard of—the sovereign issued his mandate, and all the males were called upon to serve. Now it required the whole weight of regal authority, added to the desire of gain, to enable the Burman government, after much exertion and considerable delay, even to procure sufficient men to form a nucleus, round which the reinforcements and levies might gradually rally; besides which, as the money offered for bounty was generally taken from the soldier under some pretext or other, before he had it long in his possession, it was viewed rather in the light of a bait than otherwise by the population.

The unfortunate peasantry were the principal sufferers by the war. Come foe or friend, they were equally in danger, their own troops committing robberies and cruelties upon them to an unlimited extent: they took up their abode among them, and

* Nearly £20.

after receiving the best of every thing the village could afford, generally requited the donors by setting fire to their houses. Yet these very men were villagers themselves, and liable to have the same scenes performed in their own homes.

The situation of the Burman peasant was certainly most pitiable. If his services were demanded as a soldier, however unfit he might be, go he must. Should he attempt to desert, his family was pledged for his good conduct, and would be immediately butchered; and if he chanced to find himself placed in opposition to the British, it must be with the unsatisfactory feeling that he had no chance of conquering, but was forming one more victim to the obstinacy and pride of his besotted court. At this time the whole of the country from Prome to Patnagoh had been laid waste and ravaged by the marauding bands of the late army, who now acknowledging no ruler, and, accustomed to a life of rapine, roved about the country, plundering on their own account, and sparing neither the partizans of government nor those of the British.

The Burman government was further disheartened by the fall of Arracan, which was taken possession of by Brigadier-general Morrison, after a sharp action, on the 1st of April, and the whole of the enemy's troops immediately retired from that province, and partly re-assembled, to the amount of two thousand men, at Chalain and Sembeghewn. On these points we confidently expected General Morrison would

march, as a road was known to exist from Aeng over the Arracan mountains, by which he might have arrived on the Irrawaddy in twelve days, but he did not advance beyond the town of Arracan; and instead of quartering his army during the monsoon on the banks of the Irrawaddy, in the dry, airy districts of Ava, was obliged to remain in the swampy pestilential flats of Arracan, where one-half of his army perished by disease, and the rest became so emaciated from sickness, that it was completely disorganized and useless.

How very different was the situation of the British army now, compared to what it had been at Rangoon the preceding year. Then, half starved, nothing but sickness around us, and virtually blockaded in our lines, we little anticipated that we should ever be so comfortable, so completely at home as we were at Prome, where it seemed as if the inhabitants had been under our sway for years instead of days. Our morning and evening rides used to be prolonged to Terreeketteree, six miles from Prome, passing through numerous villages, where our presence was hailed with the greatest respect. Our servants and followers straggled all over the country in search of cattle, without molestation, and our intercourse was totally divested of all those disputes and quarrels which might naturally be expected to take place between two distinct people, who had suddenly been converted from enemies to friends. Only one murder was committed while we were at Prome, and the

perpetrator being delivered up to the Musghi, was executed according to the laws of his country.

Terreeketteree, or Issay Mew, was formerly an immense city, which flourished many years before the downfall of the Pegue monarchy; and the remains of its walls, which can be traced for two miles and a half in length, and as many in breadth, attest the truth of the reports concerning its former importance. The ruins of the walls are brick, and of great thickness, and in their vicinity are two huge masses of brick of a conical shape, about two hundred feet high, evidently of great antiquity, and perfectly similar to some of the ancient Hindoo religious buildings. They are said by the traditions of the country to have been erected by a number of strangers, who came into these districts many years past, but for what purpose is not known. Of the origin of Issay Mew, several romantic and improbable legends are handed down; and one so closely resembles the history of the foundation of Carthage, that it is worth mentioning.

It relates that the favourite wife of one of the lords of this country, being desirous of obtaining some territory as a gift from her sovereign, demanded as much land as she could encircle with a bull's hide. The request was granted, and the lady claimed as her right all the ground she with the hide cut into thongs could encompass, where she built Issay Mew, which consequently is also called Terreeketteree, or single skin*.

* Symes's Ava.

The interior of Issay Mew is now cultivated, and also contains two or three villages, which are but poor substitutes for the multitudes which must formerly have inhabited this spot, and of whose buildings not a vestige now remains. This scarcity of ruins on the site of ancient towns, is accounted for in this country by the circumstance of all the houses, from the peasant's to the king's, being made of wood, which fragile material is not calculated to survive the ravages of time; and in the remote and distant ages in which this town flourished, it is to be supposed that the art of sculpture could be but little known, and therefore that few religious or public edifices were built approaching nearer to grandeur or taste than the unmeaning cones before mentioned.

A very good and well-frequented road leads from Issay Mew to the Shoé Shando Prah. The latter edifice, in point of splendour, is not to be compared with the Shoé-Dagon, but still it has many claims on the attention of the passer by. The north and west entrances are very tastefully covered by a roof richly adorned with carved work, and the pillars supporting it covered with gilding and drawings of different kinds. At the foot of the steps are two hideous colossal images of griffins guarding the sacred ground; and on the summit of the hill, the small area on which the Pagoda stands is surrounded by temples containing gods, pagodas, numerous brass bells, and a much revered and respected relic, in a stone flag, six feet long, on which is impressed

the figure of a foot covered with characters of the Pali language, and strange figures resembling hieroglyphics. This is supposed to be the impression of Buddha's foot when he came upon the earth, and several others are scattered over the kingdom; but at such distances from each other, that his stride must totally have eclipsed all the wondrous doings of the seven-league boots of nursery-room celebrity.

The Shoé Shando presented a very lively scene on festival days, which occur on the eighth day of the moon, full moon, the eighth day of the moon in her wane, and the last day of the moon.

On these days, shortly after sunrise, we used to see the whole population of Prome and the vicinity, gaily clad in their best attire, issuing from the gates of the city in groups of families, including the infant just able to walk, and the venerable parents, who were fast verging towards the grave, but who, unless deterred by decrepitude or ill health, always accompanied the younger members of their family to offer up their prayers to the beneficent being whom they suppose represented by Gaudma.

Each member of these interesting groups bore some trifling present as an offering to the deity; some had trays of rice or fruits on their heads, others carried baskets of sweet-smelling flowers; here and there you saw a paper umbrella, richly embellished with tinsel and gilding, and intended to shield the favourite image from the sun; and almost all were provided with small tapers to burn before

the shrine. At the foot of the steps all the shoes were taken off, it being considered very insulting to enter the presence of a superior otherwise than barefooted. The parties then advanced to the image, and whilst one of the number tolled the bell, the rest threw themselves on their knees, and offered up their prayers, every now and then, with uplifted hands, proffering the gifts, which, if eatable, were deposited in large stone vases appropriated for that purpose; but if merely flowers, were placed in small jars before the god, or strewed on the ground around.

I observed that out of the numerous images of Gaudma which were placed here, one little dirty figure, far inferior to his companions in gilding and finery, appeared to bear away the palm of sanctity, for to his shrine every one resorted. Rice, umbrellas, and flowers in abundance, were presented to the fashionable idol, whilst the others were scarcely noticed; and it is therefore to be presumed, that he had performed some wonderful miracle, or else the belles of Prome had voted him the fashion.

Among the large assemblage of people united here, the females, as in every other country, were by far the most numerous and devout. The young men were few in number, and there were not many priests; the latter, indeed, do not play a very conspicuous part; they seem to be merely attendants on the gods, and but seldom offer up many prayers. The brilliant colours of the silks in which the women

were clad, and their cleanly, smart style of dress, added to the real devotion they seemed to feel when uttering their prayers, rendered them in appearance far superior to the Bengalese women, who, nurtured in restraint and ignorance, are, except in beauty, certainly not to be compared with the Burmahs.

Although on these festival days labour of every sort is forbidden and a fast enjoined until sunset, we never observed that these rules were acted up to by any portion of the population, as, the prayers once over, they resumed their daily avocations; and it is very probable that the unsettled state of the country had occasioned this laxity in their religious observances—particularly as the occupation of selling to us was far too profitable to be so often relinquished. In the evening, should the offerings of the righteous have been productive of many tapers, an illumination takes place on the pagodas, and when their numerous mouldings have been lined with candles it has a very pretty effect.

It is singular that the Burman nation, though bordering on Hindostan, should differ so materially from the inhabitants of that country in one custom, which is a peculiar characteristic of the East; and it offers a good sample of their mental superiority in that respect over their neighbours. In this country women are free: they are not regarded with that unworthy jealousy or suspicion which prompts the oriental nations to immure their women in a seraglio; but are allowed unrestrained intercourse

with every one. It is true that, like all semi-barbarous nations, the Burmahs look upon women as inferior beings to themselves; a husband will not eat at the same table with his wife; if walking together, she must not presume to precede him; and her domestic occupations are of the most menial kind,—she must proceed to the river several times a day, for the purpose of drawing water; she beats out the rice from the husk, and prepares the family meals, and, if her time allows it, must employ herself in sewing her own or husband's dresses, or else working at the loom. The women are never idle, and yet, notwithstanding this drudgery, are lively, intelligent and good-humoured, for the most part know how to read and write, and enter with the greatest warmth into the news and politics of the day. They are very attentive to their social duties, and, though unrestrained by the rules of decorum, are seldom guilty of infidelity to their husbands. With this freedom there is much less danger of a woman proving false to her marriage vows than when under the surveillance of a jealous husband, or imprisoned within the walls of a harem. In the one instance she is the guardian of her own honour, and will seldom prove false to the trust; in the other, she feels herself slighted, she finds her reputation is in the hands of others, and she then, from revenge, will become guilty of acts she would not otherwise have thought of. Chastity, in the sense we understand the word,

is but little known, and no degree of obloquy is attached to a girl who may have parted with her maiden fame without the ceremony of marriage; indeed, the latter is merely a civil arrangement. A custom also prevails which cannot be too much reprehended, as placing the tender (we may almost say fair) sex on a level with brutes, and exposing a lovely girl to be torn from the friends of her infancy—from the youth she may have singled out as the object of her affection—to be forced into the arms of a stranger, whose only merit is having paid the mother one or two hundred rupees!

A husband makes no scruple of disposing of his wife, or a brother of a sister, in this mode, and not the least disgrace reflects upon them for the transaction, although the girl becomes *bonâ fide* the property of the purchaser, and cannot quit him until she produces sufficient money to redeem herself, when he is obliged to part with her. In the same manner, if a woman happens to be indebted to any one, and unable to liquidate the debt, she becomes bound to him until she can discharge the obligation.

To these transactions the law lends its sanction, and thus strikes at the source of social intercourse, which never can be secure as long as a family may be exposed, by sudden and unmerited misfortunes, to be thus thrown at the mercy of its creditor, who, before the eyes of the father, might tear away his wife and daughters, and oblige them to

sell themselves to the first purchasers, and reimburse him by the disgraceful wages of their prostitution.

What, however, would drive others to madness, has no effect upon the Burmah. In this case he only sees his distresses alleviated, without any blame or disgrace being attached either to himself or the females of his family; for, strange to say, this very liberal-minded race does not consider the lady's honour at all tainted by these proceedings.

Another curious custom with respect to the Burman females is, that none of them are ever allowed to leave the kingdom, from the idea that, by so doing, the population would diminish.

The Burman women pay great attention to the adornment of their persons. Their hair is tied in a bunch at the back of the head; and, as a quantity of it is considered a great beauty, false tails, sometimes two or three in number, are ingeniously mixed with the real hair, so as to form a large knot, which is further adorned with flowers. In the ears, instead of rings, they wear rolls of gold about half an inch in diameter; and round the neck gold chains, differing in make and value according to the wealth of the owner.

The lower garment * consists of one single piece of variegated silk of different patterns: this is wrapped round the body, partly covering the bosom, and tucked in under the arm. It falls as low as the

* Called, in Burmah, *loonghee*.

ancle, but being open in front, and merely lapping over a little when not moving, if they walk, discloses the whole of the leg; only one limb being visible at a time, according to the forward step. Custom soon deprived this dress of the indecent appearance with which it first struck us. It is peculiar to the whole of this part of Asia, and has been so from time immemorial. The "engee," a light muslin jacket worn open, and red sandals, complete the habiliments of the sex. Those moving in higher circles wear the same, but of more costly materials.

The Burman women are well made, but not distinguished either by the height or delicacy of their person; they are, in general, rather small and stout, and much fairer than the Hindoos. Some, indeed, have remarkably fair complexions, and their features partake much of their Tartar origin. Their hair and eyes are black, but the latter, generally speaking, not so handsome as those of the Hindostanee women. In order to improve their appearance, they rub the face, hands, and bosom with powder of sandal wood, and tinge the tips of their nails with red; they, however, considerably diminish their pretensions to beauty by constantly chewing the betel nut and paun leaf, which blacken the teeth and give the inside of the lips and the tongue a disgusting look; added to which, the cheroot, made of chopped tobacco, wrapped up in a teak leaf, is never out of their mouths.

The most extraordinary idea the Burmahs have

adopted with regard to beauty, is, that of accustoming the girls, from the earliest age, to turn the inside of the elbow out, as if dislocated. This is the *ne plus ultra* of elegance, and in all statues and drawings of women, they are represented in this posture. Seeing an old woman one day with her arm thus distorted, I examined it, and found that practice had rendered the joint so flexible, that it moved with equal facility either way. The old lady was quite proud of the degree of curve she could give the arm, and appeared much flattered by my notice of it.

The men are a fine, athletic race; and though not tall, are very muscular and well-proportioned, offering a striking contrast to the straight, shapeless limbs of the inhabitants of Hindostan. When young, they are mostly handsome: their demeanour is marked by an elasticity of step and dignity of countenance which denote the confidence they feel in themselves; and a young Burman dandy, with his handkerchief fantastically wound in his long black hair, his dashing silk loonghee tied round the waist, and the graceful tartan scarf* thrown carelessly over his shoulder, and much resembling the Highland plaid, is really a fine figure to contemplate. In maturer age, however, they rapidly fall off; their features soon become wrinkled; and the little tuft of hair which they allow to grow on the chin (the rest of the beard being carefully plucked out) is, at that

* Pussoh.

period, any thing but ornamental to the countenance. They tattoo their thighs with a variety of curious letters and figures, intended to operate as a charm against an enemy, and also to denote servitude to the king; and this being done with a blueish mixture, gives the leg the appearance of being clothed. The chest and arms also are often tattooed, but this is performed with a red paint, and generally consists of a number of squares with mystic characters engraven on them.

During the warm weather, the Burman peasantry are clad with merely the pussoh and loonghee, but the usual dress is a black quilted jacket with loose sleeves. In addition to the scarf, men of higher rank wear muslin or velvet jackets, adorned with a profusion of gold or silver lace; and in the cold weather, some use black silk or satin pelisses lined with bear skin procured from China.

Shortly after our arrival at Prome we had an opportunity of witnessing some boxing and wrestling matches, exercises which the Burmahs are very fond of, and which they pride themselves much on excelling in. The challenge is given by stepping to the front, and with the right hand slapping the left shoulder, at the same time taunting the opponent in order to excite him; the struggle does not last long, and when ended, no animosity remains between the parties.

Another amusement of the Burman youth deserves mentioning on account of its singularity. This is a

game at ball, played by six or eight young men, formed in a circle: the ball is hollow, and made of wicker work; and the art of the game consists in striking this upwards with the foot, or the leg below the knee. As may be conceived, no little skill is required to keep the ball constantly in motion; and I have often been much entertained in watching the efforts made by the players to send the ball high in the air, so that it should fall within the limits of the ring, when it is again tossed by the foot of another. The natives of Hindostan are not acquainted with this game, but it is said to be common amongst the Chinese, Japanese, and other nations east of the Ganges. But by far the most favourite amusements of the Burmahs are acting and dancing, accompanied by a music which to my ear appeared very discordant, although occasionally a few rather pleasing notes might be distinguished. The principal instrument used in the Burman bands of music is the kiezoop, which is formed of a number of small gongs, graduated in size and tone on the principle of the harmonica, and suspended in a circular frame about four feet high and five feet wide; within which the performer stands, and extracts a succession of soft tones, by striking on the gongs with two small sticks. Another circular instrument (the boundah) serves as a bass; it contains an equal number of different-sized drums, on which the musician strikes with violence, with a view perhaps to weaken the shrill, discordant notes of a very rude species of flageolet, and of an

equally imperfect kind of trumpet, which are usually played with a total disregard of time, tune, or harmony. Two or three other instruments, similar in principle to the violin, complete the orchestra. To Europeans, there was not much to admire in the sounds produced by these instruments; neither did our music appear to have many charms for the Burmahs, whom I have seen present at the performance of some of Rossini's most beautiful airs, and of different martial pieces, by one of our best regimental bands, without expressing, either by their words or gestures, the least satisfaction at what they heard.

In condemning, however, the Burman instrumental music generally, I would observe, that some of the vocal airs have a very pleasing effect when accompanied by the Patola. This is an instrument made in the fantastic shape of an alligator; the body of it is hollow, with openings at the back, and three strings only are used, which are supported by a bridge, as in a violin.

I chanced one day to meet with a young Burman who had been stone blind from his birth, but who, gifted with great talent for music, used to console himself for his misfortune by playing on this species of guitar, and accompanying his voice. When I expressed a wish to hear him perform, he immediately struck out a most brilliant prelude, and then commenced a song, in a bold tone, the subject of which was a prophecy that had been current at Rangoon before we arrived. It predicted the appearance

of numerous strangers at that place, and that two masted ships would sail up the Irrawaddy, when all trouble and sorrow would cease! Animated by his subject, his voice gradually became bolder and more spirited, as well as his performance, and without any hesitation he sung with much facility two or three stanzas composed extempore.

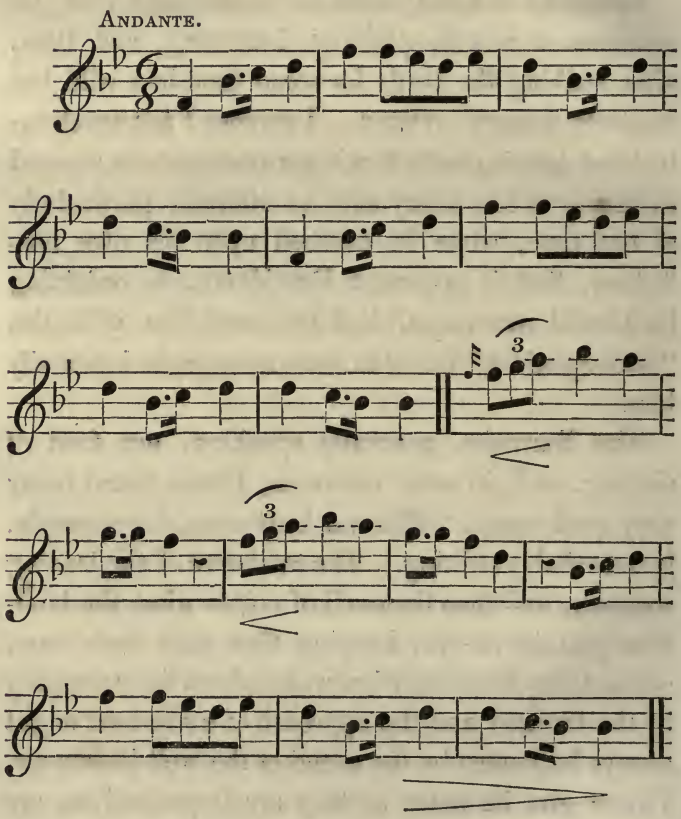
Changing suddenly from the enthusiastic tone, he commenced a soft, plaintive love-song, and then, after striking the cords for some time in a wild but masterly manner, retired. I confess I felt much interested in this poor fellow's performance, he seemed so deeply to feel every note he uttered; particularly at one time, when he touched upon his own misfortune, that it appeared Providence, in ordaining he should never see, had endowed him with this "soul-speaking" talent in some measure to indemnify him.

The Burmahs, generally speaking, are fond of singing, and, in some instances, I have heard many very good songs. The war-boat song, for example, is remarkably striking. The recitative of the leading songster, and then the swell of voices when the boatmen join in chorus, keeping time with their oars, seemed very beautiful when wafted down the Irrawaddy by the breeze; and the approach of a war-boat might always be known by the sound of the well-known air. I here give its notes as they are impressed on my memory, and also those of two other favourite airs: the first was very popular at Prome, and will be

familiar to the ear of those who were on service in Ava during the latter part of the war.

Air—No. I.

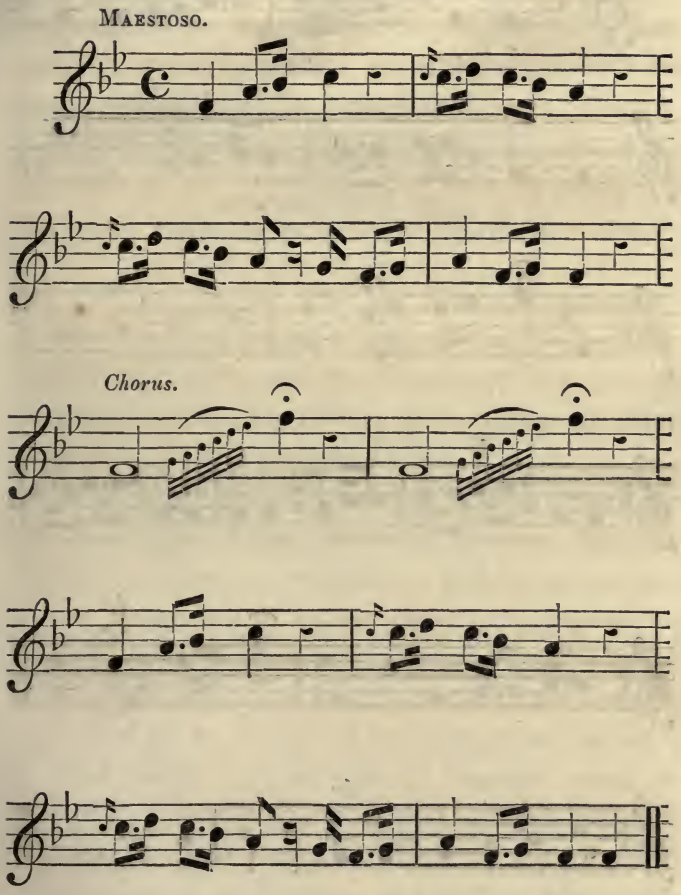
TEKIEN TEKIEN, ME ME NO SONGOLAH.*



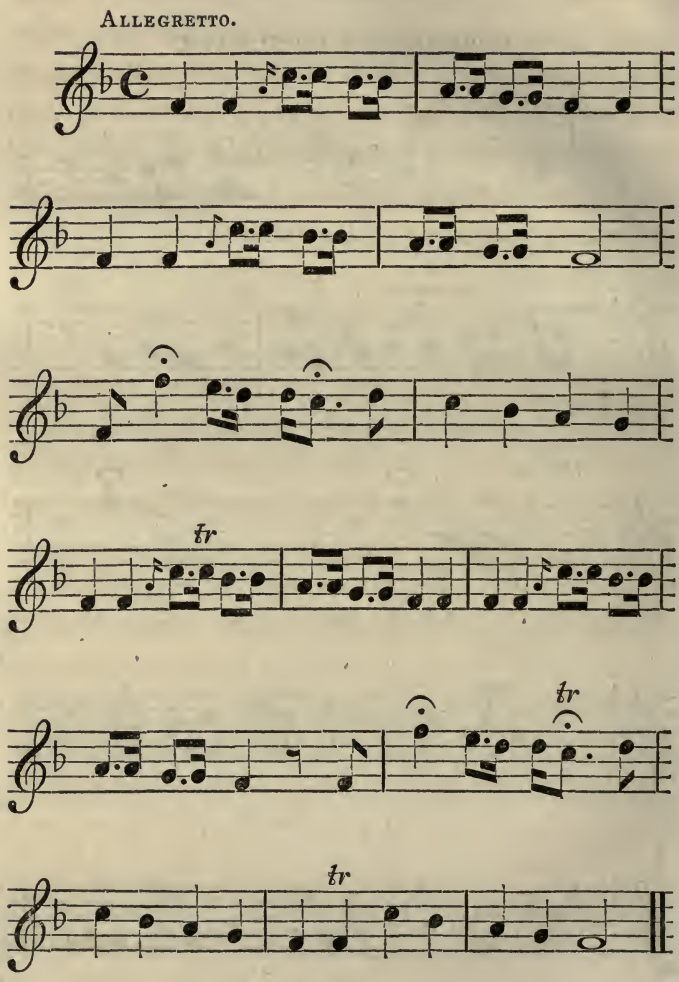
* I unluckily made no memorandum of the words of this song.

Air—No. II.

BURMAN WAR-BOAT SONG.



Air—No. III.



I have sometimes heard a trio sung in parts by three young girls, with a correctness of ear and voice which would do credit to others than the self-taught Burmahs. Many little songs, amongst others that commencing "Tekien Tekien*," were composed and sung by the Burman fair in compliment to their new and welcome visiters, the white strangers; but these, of course, are long since consigned to oblivion, unless, they recollect with pleasure

> —the grateful breath of song
> That once was heard in happier hours;

for it is very certain that the Burmahs considered themselves quite happy, when enjoying the transient glimpse of liberty, and the advantages of a just government which were offered them during the short stay of the British army at Prome.

The Burman plays do not appear to be remarkable for the number of their *dramatis personæ*. In most, there is a prince, a confidant, a buffoon or two, and a due proportion of female characters, represented by boys dressed in female attire. The dresses are handsome; and in one which I attended, the dialogue appeared to be lively and well supported, as far as I could judge from the roars of laughter which resounded from the Burman part of the audience. One sentimental scene, in which the loving prince takes leave of his mistress, and another where, after

* Prince! O Prince!—This was the title by which the Burmahs addressed us.

much weeping and flirtation, she throws herself into his arms, were sufficiently intelligible to us; but some, in which the jokes of the clown formed the leading feature, were quite lost upon those who did not understand the language. The place chosen for the representation was a spot of ground outside of our houses, the heat being very great; and here a circle was formed of carpets and chairs, lighted by torches dipped in petroleum, which threw a brilliant flare around, though accompanied by a most unpleasant odour.

Dancing succeeded, and one or two young women were the performers: like the Hindostanee Nautch, it merely consisted in throwing the body and arms into numerous graceful and rather voluptuous postures; at the same time advancing slowly, with a short steady step, and occasionally changing it for a more lively figure.

All this time the drums, cymbals, and clarionets were unceasing in their discordant sounds, and, before long, fairly drove me from the field.

One vice, which, under the cloak of amusement, is common to every part of the world, has also found its way here; and though I have not observed it carried to any great extent, yet still there are several kinds of games by which property may be transferred from one to another. The leading one is a species of draughts, played upon a chequered cloth, instead of a board; chess is also understood, and a game similar to *knuckle-bones*, played with a number

of pebbles, is likewise much in vogue amongst the lower classes.

Unlike the natives of Hindostan, the Burmahs are not betrothed to each other from their infancy; the blind god is here allowed to exercise his sway, and tighten the bonds of friendship; for, there being no restraint on the women, and freedom of intercourse existing between them and the male sex, it naturally follows that marriages are more the offspring of affection than in a country where the two parties have never previously met; and, consequently, in Ava they are not contracted till the age of puberty. To this ceremony religion lends not its holy aid; the contract is solely civil, or rather a mere agreement between the parties; and their own consent is sufficiently binding according to the laws.

When two young persons agree to unite in the bonds of wedlock, the parents of the damsel are addressed, and their sanction being obtained, the relations of the contracting parties adjust the marriage settlements. The "corbeille de mariage" is furnished by the bridegroom, in proportion to his finances, and sent on the wedding-day; a feast is then prepared, at which all the relations are present; dancing and the boisterous tones of a band enliven the festival, and the ceremony is considered concluded when the bridegroom eats out of the same plate with the bride, and presents her with a leaf of læpeck of pickled tea, which she repays by a similar gift.

When the husband and wife mutually consent to separate, they proceed to the Musghi and state their wishes, and the parties are considered free; but, in this case, the husband is obliged to share his property equally with his wife. If a man maltreats his wife, she can sue for a divorce before the court, and if her complaints are proved, the husband must give her a portion of his property, and the marriage is annulled: should the woman, on the other hand, have misconducted herself, and her husband prove the facts to the satisfaction of the chieftain, the divorce takes place without his paying any penalty.

We had often occasion to see, at Prome, the manner in which the Burmahs inter their dead, as the cholera morbus, at one period, had occasioned great mortality. And since all our scientific resources have been tried in vain to check the progress of that fatal disease, it is not to be expected that the Burmahs should find their simple remedies efficacious; but although their ideas on the subject must be rather rude, they are far from considering themselves unacquainted with the art of medicine. I recollect seeing two or three apothecaries' shops at Prome, and when we entered Denobiu a large stock of medicine was found in the house of the physician-general. They have no pretensions to surgery; and when talking of the bravery of the white people, said it was no use cutting off an arm, when a British soldier seized the summit of a stockade to assist himself in getting over,

for that he immediately made use of the other; and that, after an action, the English doctors went about the field looking for the severed legs and arms, which they fastened on again!

A good deal of ceremony attends a Burman funeral. The corpse is deposited in a curious coffin, three feet deep, covered with a profusion of cut paper, tinsel, and other ornaments, and borne on men's shoulders. This is preceded by several priests, dressed in their yellow robes, with a black-beaded rosary in one hand and a fan in the other, who now and then chaunt or pray in concert with some of the attendants. The chief mourners sob, cry, and howl, in a manner that would reflect credit on the most perfect adepts in the mourning art of the Emerald Isle; and a large concourse of the friends of the deceased forms a long string in the rear.

On arriving at the place of interment, the body is either buried, when the gaudy coffin is placed outside the tomb, most probably, with the view of preventing the attack of dogs, who often scratch up the corpses; or else is burned with its attendant paraphernalia, and the ashes deposited in a grave.

The Burmahs are not in the habit of erecting lasting memorials over the ashes of the dead: some few of the greater personages have mausoleums built to their memory, and sometimes a pagoda is dedicated in recollection of a lost friend or relation, but the practice is not general; and the consequent absence of monuments and tombs deprives the traveller of

one source of gratification and enquiry, which is felt when contemplating the memorials of ages long gone by. Persons of very high rank are often embalmed after their decease, during which time the body is laid out in state in some kioum or public edifice; but this ceremony we had not an opportunity of viewing during our stay in Ava. I heard, however, that the body of a priest at Rangoon was embalmed in this manner, and that honey was the principal ingredient.

CHAPTER X.

Burmahs have no caste—Their food—Spirits prohibited—Climate of Ava—Unhealthy season—Rise and overflow of the Irrawaddy—Soil and vegetation of Pegue and Ava—Population—Deserted villages—Origin of the Burmahs—Lootoo, or council of state—Woonghees—Attweynwoons—Maywoons—Musghis—Feudal system—Revenues—Commerce—Productions of Ava.

In one point of view, the Burmahs are far more enlightened than the inhabitants of Hindostan. Unfettered by the shackles of a narrow and illiberal religion, they acknowledge none of those distinctions of *caste*, by which one half the natives of India have assumed to themselves a nominal superiority to the rest*. To the table of a Burmah all are alike welcome; and not being restricted from eating animal food, they bear the marks of their more nutritious sustenance in their stout manly forms.

In the choice of food, they are far from cleanly: on the contrary, any disgusting meat is sought after with avidity; and this we often witnessed at Prome. A great mortality suddenly took place among the horses of the artillery and body-guard, as many as four and five dying daily; and no sooner had the animals breathed their last, than you would see them surrounded by groupes of Burmahs,

* The Cingalese, though professing the same tenets as the Burmahs, are very tenacious of their different grades of "caste."

waiting, like harpies, to pounce upon their prey. The instant permission was given them, men, women, and children commenced dissecting the carcase, and cutting the flesh into strips, (which were afterwards hung in the sun to dry,) soon left nothing but the skeleton, which, in turn, was attacked and picked by a host of half-famished pariah dogs.

Their religion, it is true, forbids them wilfully to deprive cattle of life; but this is constantly evaded. If the animal is killed by an accidental shot, nothing is said on the subject; and this I fancy occurs very frequently, as we used to find half-devoured buffaloes near the Burman pickets. Reptiles of every kind, such as lizards and snakes, are also eaten by the lower classes; and a small fish, which is kept till half putrid and then pickled, is considered a great treat; it is called gnapee, and the vicinity of it may easily be perceived by the stench which exhales from the boats laden with any quantity.

Vegetables are much used; but when not procurable, a substitute is easily found in the young leaves and sprouts of various plants, such as bamboo-tops, the cabbage of the plantain-tree, and many others: these are curried, pickled, or dressed as a sallad with oil extracted from a small seed, and serve as a relish to the bowl of rice which constitutes the Burman standing dish. Pickled tea is also considered a great delicacy; and prawns, spitted on a stick and dried in the sun, are far from unpalatable. The Burman meals are served up in

circular red japanned platters, raised about a foot from the ground by a neat little balustrade. On this fits a cover which contains a smaller dish; another, in like manner, succeeds, until at last the apparatus tapers to a point. In each of these compartments are different dishes. The lowest and largest generally contains rice; and the others are filled with china cups or plates, containing pickles, curries, and sauces.

If several Burmahs are partaking of the same meal, they assemble round the rice, which is common to all, and help themselves with their hands, occasionally seasoning the food with some of the attendant curries, which they take with a spoon and pass round. Their common beverage is water; for, although the country abounds in cattle, they do not milk their cows, and the use of spirits is interdicted: they, notwithstanding, distil a strong liquor from rice, and also use the toddy, or juice of the palmira, cocoa-nut, and date-trees. Although perfectly well known in India by this name, the latter, probably, may not be understood in England, and it will be as well to mention the process by which it is procured. At night, an incision being made in the summit of the stem of those trees, and the bark cleared away, a clear juice slowly exudes, and is collected in small earthenware jars, which are taken down every morning before sunrise. At that time the toddy forms a very pleasing and refreshing draught; but in the

course of an hour or two, when acted upon by the sun, ferments, and is extremely intoxicating and unwholesome.

We found, throughout, that the Burmahs had a great predilection for spirits, and would rather be recompensed for any exertion by a little English water (gin) or brandy than with money. "Bwandi pay, tekein," (Give some brandy, prince,) was the constant request; and so much has this taste taken root, that it will require many royal edicts again to make them abstemious.

By the laws of Alomprah, repeated intoxication was punishable with death; but some years since, it having been represented to the sovereign that the use of spirits would check the progress of the cholera, which was then raging to a most terrific extent, the interdict was taken off for the time, but again put in force after the disease ceased.

Although the most excellent beef may be procured in Ava, as well as almost every other article of animal and vegetable food, there are no sheep to be met with; and we were informed, that the only flock in the country belonged to the king. Potatoes, also, are not grown; but every vegetable peculiar to Hindostan is abundant in the upper provinces.

The fish caught in the Irrawaddy is very fine, and forms one of the principal articles of food the Burmahs possess. The hilsa and roeh fish arrive at great perfection, and, when dried or salted, consti-

tute a lucrative article of trade. We also, occasionally, procured a few of the delicate little mangoe fish at Rangoon.

It may seem very presumptuous to assert that the country in which we had lost already two thousand five hundred British soldiers by disease should be of a salubrious climate; yet, I believe, it is generally acknowledged that Ava is much healthier than the greater part of Hindostan, except in the vicinity of the swamps and inundations. The loss of our men is easily accounted for, when it is recollected the hard duty they were obliged to perform, their constant exposure to the sun and rain, and the bad quality of their food; but it is very certain that the sun here has not the same overpowering influence on the constitution as on the other side of the Ganges.

At Prome, and during the march, we were constantly walking or riding in the sun at all hours, without umbrellas, and with the thermometer sometimes as high as 110° Fahrenheit, in a tent, and still it had not even the effect of giving a head-ache; whereas, had we done so in India, a fever would have been the inevitable consequence.

The end of the rainy season is undoubtedly unhealthy, and at that time our troops at Prome suffered most severely.

The seasons in Ava may be divided into three—the cold, hot, and rainy. The former commences in

December and lasts till February: during its continuance the weather is sharp and bracing, particularly in the mornings, which are always ushered in by a fog, lasting till nine or ten o'clock. The hot weather which follows runs into the opposite extreme, and continues till May, when the rains commence, and pour without intermission till October. After that month the weather, for a short time, is again exceedingly hot; and this may be considered the most unhealthy time of the year, as the ardent rays of the sun, when drying up the swamps and inundation, create a malaria, or miasma, which is productive of much fever and dysentery.

Cholera is also prevalent in this country, as I before had occasion to observe; but it is not known whether the disease originates from local causes, or from the bad effects of the climate.

During the period of the south-west monsoon we passed at Prome, very little rain fell compared to the torrents with which we had been inundated the preceding year at Rangoon; but the Irrawaddy rose to a tremendous height.

When we entered Prome, in April, the river was about forty feet below the level of the bank; and the village of Nowwein being a desirable spot to occupy, the cavalry and his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment were cantoned there. On a sudden the river commenced rapidly rising, and, ere many days, completely inundated Nowwein, converted the

body-guard lines into a lake, and prevented any communication between the houses except by canoes. Fortunately, the quarters of the men had been elevated some feet above the ground, and but few were under water.

This unpleasant occurrence rendered it, however, necessary to move part of these troops; and a fine airy spot having been selected on the heights commanding Prome, in a few days houses were built, a pretty little village soon arose, and there the thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments were quartered.

After remaining stationary for several days, the inundation subsided, and the river resumed its natural bed, but at the end of a few weeks it again rose. These risings of the stream generally occur three times yearly, diminishing in force every time, and the last is the forerunner of the river's ebbing to its lowest state. They are attributable to the melting of the snow in the mountains of Thibet; for, although the Irrawaddy derives a vast supply of water from the numerous streams which flow from the Yomadoung and other mountains, yet it is impossible they could be so rapidly swollen by the rain as to create this sudden increase of water.

The province of Henzawaddy (Pegue) being perfectly flat, is almost every where under water during the monsoon, and consequently impassable; the roads are destroyed, and very often the only communication between different villages is by water. The soil being rich and heavy, retains for a long time the

dampness and humidity left by the subsiding waters, and it is long before the ground becomes sufficiently firm to admit of carriages passing over it. To the southward of Prome, and indeed throughout Pegue, the soil is uncommonly rich, and the vegetation so rapid, that unless the industry of man is constantly employed in clearing the ground necessary for the production of grain, it would be spontaneously covered with wood and jungle in the course of a very short time. The growth of the wood in the forests of Pegue is really surprising. Immense tall trees of different kinds form a canopy impervious to the rays of the sun, and cast a gloomy shade below, where a diversity of creepers and brambles, constantly reproducing, form an almost impenetrable labyrinth, the haunt of tigers, deer, and other wild animals, whose footsteps occasionally imprinted on the unfrequented road would be the only sign of life we could see during the many miles we traversed in these melancholy solitudes. The roads were sometimes so completely blocked up by the vegetation of one wet season as not to be recognized, and it often required all the tact and quickness of our guides to regain their traces. Such scenes as these form prolific subjects for a traveller to descant upon, and embellish with all the warmth and genius of a fervid imagination; but, alas! very different are the sensations of a person when reading a description of wild savage scenery like this, to what they would be if he was an actual spectator. In that case all the more

sublime ideas are lost in the contemplation of the difficulties and dangers actually before him; and so completely were we satiated with this luxuriance of nature, that we hailed with great delight the prospect of emerging once more into more open country.

Deprived of the warmth of the sun, and the ground being constantly in a humid state, but little grass springs up in the wilds, and that small quantity is so very rank and coarse, that it plainly indicates all the nutritious particles of the soil to be absorbed by the larger vegetable productions. In the plains which have been cleared from wood, rice grows most luxuriantly, and great quantities are annually sent from these districts to the upper provinces, but not in such abundance as to induce the supposition that none is procurable in Ava Proper, some of its districts being very productive of that grain. The soil is remarkably well adapted to the cultivation of rice, and when saturated with the rain or inundation, is so easily worked, that a rough harrow drawn by two buffaloes is almost the only implement of husbandry required. A still ruder plough is also occasionally used; and when the earth is thus partially broken, the paddy is sprinkled over the field, and left untouched till sufficiently strong to be regularly planted. When the harvest approaches, small scaffoldings are erected in each field, in which a boy keeps watch, armed with a pellet bow to drive away the crows and other birds. The corn, when beaten out, is then secured in a large bin or basket, plastered with mud, and thatched,

whence it is taken for the use of the family, as occasion may require. Almost every house we saw in Pegue was furnished with one of these private granaries; so that the inmates were in some measure independent with regard to this article of food.

In the neighbourhood of the villages small quantities of indigo, cotton, sugar-cane, tobacco, and various fruits and vegetables are grown, and prove that, if properly treated, much might be attempted successfully with the soil. Nature, indeed, has done every thing for this fertile land—man, nothing.

To look back at Pegue, and fancy that such a country had always been as desert as it actually is, would be impossible; and yet its present savage, uncultivated state tells a tale of devastation which it is painful to imagine. The ruined ramparts of Pegue, Lyne, Terreeketteree, and many other towns, plainly prove that formerly an extensive population flourished here; and, as tradition does not hint at any extermination of the race by foreign invasion, we may naturally draw the inference, that this dreary blank must have been caused by the unnatural arms of the inhabitants being turned against each other. And what enemy can there be so active in the work of destruction as civil discord? These remarks are equally applicable to Pegue and Ava: a perfect similarity exists in the circumstances of the case; and as, though bitter enemies, they have been constantly blended one with another, they may be morally considered the same nation. Compare the different situ-

ation of Hindostan: there an innumerable population exists to enjoy those advantages with which Providence has gifted the soil; here, with the exception of three or four principal towns, and a few of minor note, all is left to the uncontrouled dominion of nature.

We had very good opportunities of ascertaining the degree of population in the old kingdom of Pegue, having had troops in every part of it, especially on the banks of the Lyne, Bassien, and Irrawaddy rivers. On the former, at very short distances from each other, spots were pointed out, bearing the names of towns and villages, of which not a vestige remained, and only a few hamlets stood on its banks. Inland, east or west, between the Irrawaddy or Pegue river, we were informed scarcely any habitations were to be met with; and the same was said of the space between the Irrawaddy and Bassien river: so that the greatest part of the population is undoubtedly to be found on the banks of the principal rivers, and what we met there was but a mite in proportion to the numbers this country would require to do it justice. In Ava, to the north of Meayday, the interior is considerably better peopled: it would, however, be impossible to form a very accurate estimate of the number of the inhabitants, the Burmahs themselves not being aware of their amount.

A proof that the resources of the Burman empire, in that line, are not commensurate to its extent of territory, is, that in two years the government, when

exerting itself to the utmost, could only bring two armies of seventy thousand men into the field. Allowing that altogether the Burman army, including the troops in Arracan, Assam, and other provinces, amounted to two hundred thousand men, and judging by the rate of conscription in the district of Chalain, (where one man in twenty was obliged to serve,) the population of the whole empire, if drained in the same proportion, would be four millions; but as this may be rather an indecisive mode of calculating, it will be as well to allow a half more, and this would make the population of Ava amount, at the utmost, to six millions.

The late Colonel Symes, in his work on Ava, computes the population at seventeen millions, by supposing the number of towns and villages to amount to eight thousand; but in this number, if we may judge by experience, more than two-thirds only nominally existed, the inhabitants having, probably, emigrated to other spots, to which a new name would be given, whilst the deserted village, in the returns of the district, would be placed on the same list with the inhabited ones. This I have remarked, in many instances, to be the case, the names of those villages handed down by tradition having been invariably given me, as well as those actually in existence. Colonel Symes could not be aware of this custom, and thus his calculation is not founded on so erroneous a basis as has generally been supposed.

In this country, as well as in other parts of the East, ground, let it be ever so wild and uncultivated,

or the lapse of years since it was the haunt of man very great, still retains its original designation, and is dignified with the appellation of village. In many instances, spots have been pointed out to me by name, which it would be impossible to distinguish from the forests around, were it not that you might, by chance, perceive the ruins of an old pagoda covered with weeds, and shrubs, or the black, half-burnt remains of what had been the pillars of a kioum, which being built of stronger materials, had better withstood the ravages of time and fire than the flimsy and miserable huts which compose the dwellings of the Burman peasantry. A few hours are enough to build a village, and a few moments suffice to reduce it to ashes. The facility with which these changes are effected, must totally deprive the Burmahs of that feeling of local attachment that prevails in Hindostan, and is so well described in Sir John Malcolm's delightful memoir on Central India: any spot in the empire is to them alike; the ground, miserably destitute of inhabitants, everywhere offers them a resting-place, and nature spontaneously furnishes them with the materials for building.

The vagrant life which, in this manner, often falls to the lot of the Burman villagers, seems, in great measure, connected with the manners and customs of their ancestors, the Tartars; who, when anticipating danger from an enemy, instantly broke up their camp, and with their waggons and families, sought refuge in more remote spots. The war in Ava gave us too

many occasions of observing the same system pursued by the Burmahs; and their flight was generally so systematically arranged, that it seemed to proceed more from the dictates of established custom in those cases, than the result of sudden fear.

The original inhabitants of these plains, were the Kieaans, who now inhabit the mountains; and a party of emigrants from Hindostan, who, pleased with the appearance of the country, took up their residence at Chagain, where they built a town, and resided for some time unmolested. Many years had elapsed, when a horde of Tartars poured in from Thibet, and willingly exchanging their bleak, inhospitable plains for the more fertile vallies watered by the Irrawaddy, soon overran and conquered the whole country, except a small portion of Arracan, where the inhabitants still retained their independence. In the course of time, the invaders intermarried with the original inhabitants, and became the founders of a new race, ancestors to the present Burmese.

The Tartar dynasty reigned in Pagahm Mew during forty-five generations, when they, about five hundred years since, transferred the government to Ava or Chagain. In the succession to the crown, hereditary descent is strictly adhered to by the Burmahs; and so very far do they carry their ideas respecting the purity of the royal blood, that it is expected the heir to the throne should be issued from a female of royal descent, or else his claim would not be legal; and, in consequence of this custom, the males

of the royal family may marry their sisters. Thus it is said to be the intention of the present Queen of Ava, that her young daughter should be married to the prince royal, her step-brother.

The form of the government of Ava, though strictly despotic, is still not destitute of an appearance of deliberation and debate; and the lootoo, (klootdau,) or council of state, is well calculated to temper and modify the overbearing commands of a half-civilized tyrant. It is composed of four woonghees, four woondocks, four saradoghees, and four nakhandohs. The woonghee, next to the princes of the royal family, ranks the first of the nobility; the name signifies the bearer of a burthen, and implies, figuratively, that he is laden with the cares of the state. At the time we captured Rangoon, there were five woonghees, of whom the Kee Woonghee was the first. Kee, it must be understood, does not imply pre-eminence, but relates to an office he formerly held of superintendant of granaries, and which he retained as a distinguishing appellative. His father filled the same appointment before him; therefore, his rise to that exalted station had been gradual and expected. He was represented as being a good, kind-hearted man, and free from most of those bad qualities which form the ingredients of a Burman chieftain's character. He deprecated the war with the British very much, had no personal courage, and although he had carried the victorious arms of the Burmahs into the heart of Assam, did not shine much in the capacity of a

general, a situation which the Burman chiefs, without any regard to their particular abilities, are called upon to fill. In the arts of dissimulation and deceit, he appeared to be as well versed as the generality of his colleagues, of whom, notwithstanding his numerous defects, he was undoubtedly the best principled. The Maha Bundoolah's character is known; Shumbah Woonghee was killed at Kumaroot; Sykia Woonghee had taken post at Tongho; and the other, who remained at court, Kollien Mengie, whom we did not hear much of for some time, had raised himself by his arts and intrigues from a very low rank, and now gave free scope to the vicious propensities of his disposition, which was vindictive, treacherous, and cruel.

The woondocks, who take the next rank in the legislative body, give their opinions on the case that may be under discussion, but have no vote in council; they, however, in many cases, decide without referring to the woonghee, if the subject is of minor importance. The saradoghees, or secretaries, and nakhandohs, or reporters, who constitute the remaining members of this council, merely act in the capacity their names indicate, and have no further influence.

The lootoo holds its sittings daily in the royal palace, and is in great measure controled by the privy council, which is quite differently constituted.

It consists of an indefinite number of attweynwoons, or ministers of the interior, who have constant access to the king, and whose actual power

and influence is greater than a woonghee's, although their official rank is inferior. One of these is in constant attendance on the sovereign, accompanied by a sandozain, or royal writer. When the king issues an order, he gives it to the attweynwoon, who delivers it to his sandozain. The latter immediately writes it down, as it would not otherwise be valid, and passes it to a nakhandoh, of whom there is always one in waiting, whose business it is to transmit the order to the woondocks in the lootoo. If it is a matter of importance; the woondocks present it to the woonghees; and when their consent is obtained, the act has the force of a law, and is published.

In this distribution of the cares of government there is a salutary and judicious check on the despotism of the sovereign, which in fact places the system on a more liberal footing than it might be supposed would prove acceptable to an eastern despot; for, although laws emanate from him, they are subject to the sanction of the two councils, who, if they disapprove of the measures in agitation, refer the proposals back to the king, with a respectful remonstrance that they do not think them calculated to prove beneficial to the country. It is true that if the king does not admit of the objection, the orders must be published; but still the delay attendant on discussion is serviceable, as it allows time for the king to cool and deliberate upon the steps he may have taken when acting under the influence of an ungovernable fit of passion.

Very seldom, however, do the members of the court presume to dispute the wisdom of their sovereign's mandates; and he, at the same time, is kept in perfect ignorance of many of their proceedings, though of the utmost importance to the welfare of his dominions.

The internal management of the provinces is delegated to the maywoons, or viceroys. Their power is almost unlimited: they have an unshackled control over the persons and properties of their subjects, and are solely accountable to the sovereign for their acts; and to him, when any very particular occurrence takes place, they make a reference. The principal of these governments are Henzawuddy, or Pegue, Bassien, Arracan, Martaban, Prome, and Mergui, or Tenasserim. Minor districts are mostly confided to the jurisdiction of the musghis.

Of these magistrates there is one to each village: they are the principal municipal officers, and may be compared to a mayor, except that their jurisdiction is more extensive. They are generally selected from among the inhabitants, as being qualified either by talent or experience to preside over the remainder; but their rank, not emanating from the crown, is considered in a very light point of view, although in their own districts they have a considerable portion of authority.

To them all petty causes of discord are referred, and all the minor parts of civil administration: they

receive the fines and taxes to be transmitted to higher authorities. On them devolves the responsibility of collecting the number of men at which the village may be taxed, towards furnishing its quota for the public service; and, in case government requires war or despatch boats, the office of procuring them falls to their lot; they are, in fact, the representatives of the village, and are responsible to the maywoon for the good conduct of their villagers. Under the maywoon is a chekey, or deputy, who assists in the administration; and the rayhoon, or collector of revenue, has also a good deal of power and authority in the provincial governments, and, in the absence of the other, takes the command.

There are no salaries paid to any of the chieftains about the court, or to the maywoons; but all have grants of land, villages, or taxes, assigned them for their support. Thus the Prince of Sarawaddy derives his revenue from the province of that name; his brother had Tongho assigned to him, and young Prince Memiaboo was lord of Sandoway in Arracan.

This system of rewarding services by the grant of land, is only exposing the country still more to the horrors of unjust taxation, as each petty tyrant within his own demesnes naturally plays the same part that the king does over the whole. For example; if an order arrives from the court to the maywoon of a district, directing him to levy 20,000 ticals on his vas-

sals, he will call together the superior chieftains under him, and direct them to raise 25,000; they, again, assemble the musghis and chiefs of the small villages, and assess them according to their size, so that the sum may amount to 30,000 ticals; and these minor harpies, in procuring from their villages the money required, demand probably a half more to enrich themselves. Thus the unfortunate peasant, whenever a demand is made by the crown, pays double what he is supposed to be giving; and the surplus so gained is divided amongst the chieftains according to their address in procuring it. Whenever the chief of a district is going to make a journey, he instantly levies a tax on the inhabitants for his support; but those towns which are the residence of the maywoons being exempted from some other taxes in lieu of this, the weight does not fall very heavy. Every conscript also, on leaving his native village, is furnished with eight ticals and provisions at the general expense. These feudal ideas extend to every branch of the government. Each chief is held responsible for the fidelity of his vassals; and should disturbances or robberies take place, he is the person called upon to explain. Having power of life and death over his followers, his rule may be made very arbitrary, and is often much abused. We heard of many instances in which these chieftains ordered men, women, and children to be executed, under pretence that they were favourable to our cause, when the only crime the poor

wretches had been guilty of, was a wish to escape from the thraldom in which they were held, and to return to the villages whence they had been expelled. The chieftains are also obliged, when called upon, to attend with a certain number of their followers, if their services are required in the field.

One great difference between this mode of government and that of the feudal era, is, that no honours or titles are hereditary; and, consequently, that not the slightest drawback exists on the power of the crown, as to the king alone belongs the power of appointing to the command of territory: but were the contrary to be the case, and, as with the barons of Europe, both title and influence to descend from father to son, a natural tie and affection would exist between the lord and his vassals which might prove highly dangerous to the stability of a despotic government. The case, however, is otherwise; and the son of the first nobleman in the kingdom would, on the death of his father, unless previously distinguished, be placed on a level with with the common herd. This does not generally occur, and we found in many instances that the chiefs of rank were of good families.

Birth is, owever, no necessary qualification to rise to the highest situations of the state; the road to distinction is alike open to all, and is generally followed with more success by people of intriguing character, than by those of talent and information. Of the former we had instances in the Queen, Men-

zaghee, and Kollein Mengie; and the Maha Bundoolah united both characters in his own.

From the uncertain mode of collecting the revenue, it is impossible, without much profound research, to surmise what the annual amount may be; but it cannot be very great, as it only consists of the tenth of every article of produce; and, as it is nearly certain that the population is far short of what was supposed, it may naturally be concluded that the revenue is likewise inconsiderable. It is collected part in kind and part in money; and everything thus obtained is the sole property of the king, and but rarely applied to the exigencies of the state.

The tithe of the corn is carefully hoarded up in granaries, such as those we found at Rangoon, Denobiu, and Prome; whence it is distributed to the army, or remains as a store in case of any sudden emergency: but all the bullion is sent to the royal coffers. On every foreign article imported, a tenth is likewise imposed and demanded in kind; so that the sovereign obtains divers objects of European manufacture which are much prized, and which he sometimes, in a fit of generosity, bestows on his most favoured courtiers.

There being no fund appropriated for the general purposes of government, should any sudden demand be made upon it for money, the necessary sum must be raised by imposing an extra tax on the inhabitants of certain towns or districts, who in this manner are often plundered several times a year. The royal

treasure is quite sacred: on it the ministers would not presume to draw, as even to hint at such a step to the king, would be offering an insult only to be expiated by their disgrace or execution; and there, consequently, the wealth of ages accumulates, and is only occasionally produced for the purpose of gilding some new pagoda, erecting a palace, or some equally selfish gratification.

How much more would not the nation flourish, and his own wealth increase, if the king, with a liberal and judicious hand, diffused his treasure throughout the impoverished realm, and, by encouraging trade and industry, increased the prosperity and welfare of his country. Now, by the ruinous system that prevails, the government is silently undermining its own resources: drained to the uttermost farthing, and reduced to abject poverty, the inhabitants are reckless of the superior advantages attendant on moderate wealth, as to that state they can never expect to arrive, or, if they do, it will be with certainty of being marked as a prey for the minions of the court.

To this system of extortion may, in great measure, be attributed the comparative backwardness of the Burman nation in wealth and civilization, compared to China and Hindostan. With the former, a considerable inland trade exists; the Chinese importing raw silks, porcelain, and other manufactures, and receiving in return, precious stones, and the various

produce of Ava; but this intercourse, though useful and necessary to the Burmahs, is but little calculated to bestow many lasting advantages on the bulk of the empire; and it is only by an unrestrained communication with British India, that the Burmahs can hope to derive any permanent benefit; as, in exchange for their valuable forests of teak, they might import all those various articles of civilized life which, at the same time that they increase the wealth, would also improve and enlarge the views, of the inhabitants. When the vicinity of the two countries is considered, it seems extraordinary that a more lively traffic did not exist between them. It is true that at one period a brisk exchange of goods took place in Arracan, whence they were transmitted over land to Ava; but the very nature of the mode of transport clearly points out that this supply could not have been sufficiently extensive to diffuse itself over the empire. Burman boats, also, formerly sailed through the Sunderbunds up to Calcutta; but it does not appear that either of the ports of Bassien and Rangoon, which were open to our shipping, possessed any Burman traders of much wealth. There the trade was monopolized by European and Armenian merchants, the smallness of whose capital, and contracted views, prevented their acting on an enlarged scale; besides which, they had to contend with all the petty annoyance and trouble they met with from the Burman authorities, who, instead of encouraging

their efforts, were constantly throwing obstructions in the way.

Thus, there being but little field for private industry, or at least an effectual check being placed on it by the exactions of Government, all the efforts the Burmahs might make to bring themselves forward must fail, opposed as they would be, though indirectly, by the strong arm of power; and it therefore is evident, that as long as that system of government exists which absorbs all the wealth of the kingdom, and keeps its inhabitants in the lowest state of poverty, no improvements can take place; but the mass of the nation becoming at last quite exhausted by the constant drains for the royal treasury, must revert gradually to a state of barbarism.

The productions of Ava are numerous, and, if properly improved upon, would prove profitable articles of trade. Tobacco grows to perfection: indigo is also cultivated with success, but in very small quantities: the silk wrought in the upper provinces from the raw materials imported by the Chinese is of a very superior quality. Ivory and precious stones, such as rubies, sapphires, and jasper, are produced in Ava; and gold, silver, iron, lead, and tin are also to be found. Commerce, however, cannot flourish without the extraneous aid of money; but in this country the precious metal is melted into bars and ingots, and merely kept to look at; and the value of bullion is completely paralyzed. Latterly, the continued drains

on the government for money to carry on the war, and the utter inability of the inhabitants to contribute more, obliged the monarch to part with some of his ill-gotten wealth, and offer it as a reward to those who would enlist: but this was merely a temporary measure, forced upon him by an accumulation of untoward circumstances.

CHAPTER XI.

Religion of Ava—Boodh, or Gaudma—Traces of the Pallis—Priesthood—Their Customs—Educate the Burman Youth—Vows of Celibacy—Holy Women—Kioums, or Monasteries—Curious Caves at Prome and Pagahm—Library at Prome—Pali Language—Maps—Astrology—Evil Omens—Witchcraft—Distinctions of Burman Nobility—The Tsaloeh—Golden Chattahs—Jurisprudence—Instance of Venality—Punishments—Mode of Execution—White Elephant—Currency.

The Burmahs, like the Cingalese, are Buddhists, and devoted to the worship of Boodh Buddha, or Gaudma, who, in the Hindoo mythology, figures as the ninth Avatar or incarnation of the deity upon earth*. He was the son of Mahadavee and Shooddhōduum, and, when young, went to school, taking with him ten thousand other boys. On his arrival there, he began to instruct his master, who, unable to answer his questions, and astonished at his knowledge, ran and hid himself among the boys. Boodhu then commenced teaching his doctrines, and married no less than eighty-four thousand wives. The rest of his life was passed on earth in prayers and meditations; and before he left the world, the gods came down and worshipped him.

Ward, in his work on the Hindoo Mythology†, states, that "the Buddhists deny the truth of every

* *Vide* Ward on the Hindoos, vol. ii. p. 231. Boddhu Poranu.

† Vol. i. p. 20.

thing invisible: they deny the existence of the Creator, and say that everything rose by chance; that there is no future state, neither rewards nor punishments; and that as the trees in an inaccessible forest grow without a planter, and die without a destroyer, so the world springs up and dies as a matter of course."

Gaudma is said to have existed two thousand four hundred years ago, and to have been a Brahman and a Gooroo, or teacher. At that period, the Boodh religion extended all over India; and although the Burmahs state their religion to have been originally introduced from Ceylon* into Arracan, yet it is not unlikely the nearer connection with Hindostan, in former days, may have been the means of their assuming that faith; and that they merely now look up to the Cingalese as the heads of their religion, from the circumstance of Ceylon being the only part of Hindostan where that faith is solely followed. In every part of India, relics of the Boodh religion are extant; and in the famous caves of Elephanta and Elora, to the westward, numerous images of Boodh are to be seen, representing him nearly in the same posture in which he is now placed by the Burmahs. Colonel Franklin, also, in pursuing his interesting

* Dr. Davy, in his History of Ceylon, says that the Cingalese state the present form of their religion to have been taken from the Burmese, whose missionaries used constantly to visit that island; but this assertion is in direct contradiction to the sentiments of the latter, who revere the Cingalese as their instructors.

research for the ruins of Palibothra, discovered, near Bhagulpore, a colossal image of the Jains, the exact counterpart of the Burman figures of Gaudma. The sacred language of the Boodh religion is the Pali, which, to the natives of Ava and Siam, may be considered in the same light as the Sanscrit is to the Hindoos.

This text is solely known to the priests; and the legends of religion and history being written in it, the clergy, consequently, become the depositaries of all the lore of the country. Although once a most powerful nation, the language is now all that exists of the Pallis; even their name is forgotten, and it is with much labour and research that the probable site of their capital, Palibothra, has been fixed upon.

It may be as well to mention the vague outline of the history of the Pallis, which is all that has been elucidated respecting them *, and relates that about two thousand years before the birth of Christ, the empire of Hindostan composed four rich and powerful kingdoms, which, though virtually independent of each other, yet, for several centuries, acknowledged one supreme head in the sovereign of the most potent of the four nations, under whose authority, they, in times of mutual danger, agreed to act.

The nation of the Prachii Prasii, or Pallis, was the most powerful of these, and comprised the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Oude; and of this Balia-

* Franklin's Enquiry into the Site of Palibothra.

puthra, or Palibothra, was the capital. It was built by the Patriarch Bali, a few generations after the flood. Bali, according to tradition, came from the west, attended by his sons, Ang, Bang, and Kali, who settled in Bengal, under the name of Baliputhras, or descendants of Bali.

In the year 303, A. C., we find the first authentic connection of Palibothra with ancient history. At that time, Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander the Great's successors, determined to attack and conquer India; but on crossing the Indus, found that Sandracotta, an Indian of low extraction, by his talents and bravery, had reduced all India to his sway, and was prepared to repel his invasion with an army of six hundred thousand men, and a number of elephants. Fearful of engaging so potent a prince, he agreed to retire on payment of five hundred elephants, and having concluded peace, despatched Megasthenes to Palibothra, as ambassador. He * remained there several years, and wrote an account of the country, which has partially been transmitted to us by Strabo, Arrian, and other writers. Palibothra was subsequently overwhelmed by an irruption of the Ganges, and no traces of it now exist. Major Rennell and d'Anville suppose it to have formerly stood on the site of Allahabad; and Colonel Franklin thinks that the vicinity of Bhagulpore, on the Ganges, is a more likely spot. This, however,

* Robertson's Ancient India, p. 34.

is immaterial: the nation no longer exists, nor is it known what caused its subversion.

It is evident that there is a connecting link between the Burman religion and that of Hindostan; but there are several circumstances relative to the Burman, which would induce the supposition that some other tenets had been formerly inculcated; and was it not a very hazardous opinion, I should certainly be inclined to think that there must have been some connexion between Burmah and Egypt.

In Ava, the constant ornaments of the religious edifices are sphinxes, griffins, mermaids, and crocodiles, which are the exact symbols of the religion of the Egyptians. Neither the Chinese, Hindoos, or Mussulmans, employ the same emblems, and, consequently, it is not from imitating them that this custom has taken root. Does it not, therefore, seem strange that Ava and Egypt should have given the same ideal forms to different accompaniments of their religious emblems? and would not this warrant the conclusion that some unknown cause exists for the similarity? Those immense masses of brick, the Dagon and Shoemadoo pagodas, are totally dissimilar to any religious edifices in India, and approach, in idea, nearer to the pyramids than any other relic of antiquity; but still, this is a very wild hypothesis, and one so little borne out by probability, that it scarcely bears discussing.

The images of Buddha are always represented with a smiling countenance, and his doctrines are

very mild and beneficent. By them it is forbidden to slay any domestic animal; but no restrictions are made on the general food; and the tenets of Boodh are further distinguished from the usual worship of the Hindoos, by the simplicity and purity of the offerings at the altar.

The priesthood, on whom the office devolves of superintending the public worship, forms a very distinct class, and may, in great measure, be compared to Roman Catholic monks. The candidates for this office commence their noviciates at an early age, and are not admitted as members of the holy brotherhood until they have undergone an examination. They then have their heads shaved, assume the flowing yellow robes, (the sacerdotal colour,) and take a vow of celibacy.

The common name for the priests is Poonghi, or Rhahaan. In the vicinity of each town, a number of kioums, or monasteries, are prepared for their reception, and there they assemble in small fraternities, and devote the greatest part of their time to the education of the Burman youth.

Their food is derived from the charity of the parish, and early every morning a certain number of them are to be seen gliding through the streets with downcast eyes, carrying large japanned baskets for the reception of food. These are always very well plenished by the villagers, who, as the priests pass their houses, run out and contribute fruit, rice, curries, and other eatables, according to their means. This

collection is afterwards arranged properly in the convent, and distributed among the brethren, who all dine at twelve o'clock. The priests are forbidden to receive money of any kind; and all their wants being provided for by their parishioners, they do not feel the want of it.

Being the only persons in the empire acquainted with the Pali language, they are the best informed class of the whole, and their principal occupation is to instruct the children in reading and writing. The schools I have always seen very well attended; and instruction being thus diffused gratis, it is very rare to find a Burmah who cannot read and write. What is still more singular for the East, is, that girls likewise participate in the benefits of education.

In one respect the Poonghis differ totally from the ministers of religion in other countries, for they never interfere in politics or affairs of state, and they appear to have but little influence over the minds of the people. They are generally quiet and unassuming, though of an inquisitive disposition, tempered by politeness. I have often afforded them much amusement, when sketching a pagoda or convent, and they generally considered my doing so a great compliment.

One good regulation attending their vows is, that they may be cancelled; in which case, they throw off their robes and return to civil life, but the separation is final, and they cannot again enter the priesthood.

Attached to the different kioums are a few women

of a very advanced age, who perform the menial offices of bringing water, and keeping the house clean; but these are not bound by any particular obligation.

One or two of these decrepit old wretches remained at Rangoon when we captured it, and used to wander about among the different buildings like so many ghosts. They ran some risk of starving; but the soldiers having observed their forlorn state, gave a daily portion of their rice, and enabled the unfortunate beings to drag on their miserable existence.

When walking, the Poonghis carry in one hand large fans with crooked black handles, and these answer the double purpose of fanning and shading them from the sun. In the other hand is a rosary of black beads, which put me in mind of those used on the continent; and this constitutes their sole attempt at ornament. The interior of their convents is likewise very plain; a mat forms their bed, and a small pillow the only other article of furniture.

The kioums, or monasteries, in which the Poonghis reside, offer beautiful specimens of carved wood and gilding. They are erected at the expense of pious individuals, and being appropriated to the service of the divinity, are allowed to have four or five roofs, terminated by a piasath, or spire. Near Prome there were some very good kioums; and one in particular, beyond the British lines, was remarkably handsome. The roof rose five stories, richly carved and gilt, and supported by superb teak pillars, reaching from the

ground to the summit. At about six feet from the ground the floor was laid, and two sets of stone steps afforded an ascent to a fine balcony which went round the building. The interior was very lofty, the pillars gilt and japanned, and the ceiling either fluted or carved fantastically; the whole executed in a most superior and finished style. In the centre of the house, a portion of the floor, equal in size to the area of the upper roof, was elevated about a foot above the other; and on this were placed, without much regard to symmetry, a curious assemblage of gilt images of Gaudma, models of pagodas, Brahminy geese in miniature, poles with streamers, and other toys. The lower part of the room was appropriated to the Poonghis, who lounged there during the heat of the day telling their beads; and two or three smaller compartments in the building were reserved for the purposes of eating and sleeping. Adjoining the verandah was a brick building, in the shape of a pagoda, but arched inside, and divided into small niches: there all the archives and books of the convent were deposited, under the apparent protection of two images of Gaudma placed outside.

Round the kioums a space of ground is generally railed in, and planted with various fruit and other trees, which, from their variety and brilliancy of foliage, give the sacred groves a most beautiful appearance. There, blended together, you will see the palma Christi, cocoa nut, Palmyra tamarind,

plantain, and many other trees of equal beauty, forming a most pleasing contrast to the sombre appearance of the old wooden monasteries, and to the grotesque representations of devils, sphinxes, and griffins, which are always placed near the pagodas and other religious edifices.

In the neighbourhood of all the kioums and pagodas, other small buildings are erected by the care of the righteous, and are intended for the reception of the pilgrims who are travelling to pay their respects to any particular shrine, or, indeed, for the accommodation of any casual passer by: in the same manner it is not uncommon to see, at the entrance of different towns and villages, a little shed covering a couple of jars of water, for the refreshment of the weary passenger.

We had always free access to the kioums when occupied by the Poonghis; and they seemed to view our intrusion with perfect indifference, and did not in the least fancy the sanctuary of the gods polluted by our presence, even though we wore our shoes; thus showing a liberality of mind which does them much credit.

One day that I was walking on the heights near Prome, I observed an object well worthy of remark, and which I am inclined to consider connected with some religious custom, having subsequently seen something very similar, and adorned with figures of Gaudma.

On the summit of a steep tongue of land I found

a large circular opening, about fifty feet deep, caused by the earth having given way; and there being no apparent reason for this, unless an excavation existed, I immediately descended into the valley, in hopes of finding an opening at the side of the hill. After a short search, I discovered three small brick arches, about four feet high, leading into the hill; and, having crept into one of these, I perceived, by a ray of light issuing from the aperture above, that there were several more passages branching off from the spot where I remained; and I therefore determined on returning at some future period with a lantern, to examine the cavern. On subsequently renewing my search, I found that after creeping along the passage from the arch, for about five yards, the communication entered a small chamber, sufficiently high to enable me to stand erect, whence, four other passages led off in different directions, and it was from one of these having given way that the chasm had been formed in the hill. As the quantity of earth requisite to fill up the passage could not have caused such a large hollow above, it may be concluded that a room of considerable dimensions must have existed there. Notwithstanding the annoyance I experienced from many bats, which were constantly flying about my face and lantern, and from the heat, which was very oppressive, I proceeded on my hands and knees down the other passages; but, after going a very short distance, was obliged to return, the earth having fallen and filled

up the gallery so very much, that it did not seem prudent to proceed further, particularly as, from the closeness of the air, I might have been rather unpleasantly situated.

The other circumstance I alluded to as affording a proof of the connexion of these caves with religion, was, when returning from Yandaboo, and passing through the plain of Pagahm, amid the ruins of pagodas which there strike the eye, I perceived, at some distance from the road, a small hill, with the side scarped, and faced with brick, ornamented with figures of Gaudma.

In it were four arched openings similar to those before described, but much loftier, and in good repair. Delighted with the opportunity of gratifying my curiosity, and ascertaining for what purpose these were intended, I dismounted; and, tying my horse to a tree, prepared to enter the mysterious cave. At this time, the neighbourhood of Pagahm was much infested by robbers and marauders, who pillaged and murdered any of our people who fell into their hands; and, as I thought this sequestered spot might afford a very likely place of refuge for them, I took the precaution, before I went into the opening, of examining the ground, to see if any traces existed of persons having gone in before me. There I saw the fresh footsteps of men who had entered, but none appeared to have come out; concluding, therefore, that I might meet with but an uncourteous reception, should I intrude, I prudently gave up my original

intention, and, remounting my horse, galloped back to our column of march.

Among the numerous religious buildings, in and about Prome, was one, remarkable, not only from the chasteness of its architecture, but also from the purpose for which it was designed. This was the library: it was built of brick stuccoed over, much ornamented in the Burman style, and covered by a spiral roof surmounted by a Piasath and Tee. An arched doorway communicated with a small narrow passage running round the interior of the building, and having, on each side, a number of niches in the walls, containing books. Either the Burman soldiers, or our own followers, had disturbed this abode of learning, and, in the search of something more valuable, had scattered the books all over the ground; and when I looked in, two or three old Burmahs were busily employed in selecting and appropriating to themselves such works as they had taken a fancy to.

The Burman books are mostly made from slips of Palmyra-leaf, about three inches wide and a foot long; a number of which being fastened together, are tied between two thin japanned boards of the same dimensions, which constitute the binding.

The Burman character is formed of circles and segments of circles, closely connected; the letters are written from left to right, and are remarkably clear and distinct: they are formed with a sharp-pointed instrument resembling the ancient stylus, with which

the letters are engraved on the Palmyra-leaf; but this style of writing is peculiar to the Burman language. The Pali character is totally different from the Burman, the letters being square and angular, and in writing much more trouble is taken with it than the former. The books are generally composed of thin leaves made with the bark of the bamboo cut into very delicate stripes and then plaited together. They are covered with varnish, so as to be completely smooth, and are not unfrequently gilt, and the characters japanned in black. The binding and the margin of the leaves are richly ornamented with devices and grotesque figures, neatly executed with japan; and I have sometimes seen the Pali books formed of leaves of silver, copper, and ivory; the latter, particularly, are very beautiful.

In common, the Burmahs use a species of coarse brown paper, blackened over; and on this, with a white chalk pencil, they note their accounts, trace maps, &c. The latter are drawn without any reference to the compass, or on any fixed scale, but have the distances written between each town or village. Some of these maps have proved very correct, though at first sight difficult to comprehend; the trees, pagodas, mountains, and ships, being designated without any reference to the proper proportion of the objects. Of this kind of paper we used, in the stockades, to find orderly-books, muster-rolls, copies of orders from government, and a number of interesting and serviceable documents.

Letters are written with a stylus on the Palmyra-leaf, and being then rolled up in a circular form, are bound round with tape and sealed.

The Brahmins are very much esteemed and respected in Ava, not only from their superiority as a religious body, but also from their knowledge of astronomy; and so anxious were the Burmahs to retain a number of this sect in the country, that at the conclusion of the war, when all the British prisoners were released, we found that six Sepoys had been detained at Ava merely because they were Brahmins. Astrology is much confided in by the Burmahs, and they are said to be very well versed in the knowledge of the stars. The signs of the zodiac are represented in a similar mode to ours, and form a very usual ornament to their handsome gold and silver chased cups. They also put implicit faith in good and evil omens; and the comet, which was visible during our stay at Prome, was represented as emblematical of the downfal of the Burman empire.

Many inauspicious signs were seen since we arrived in Ava, which were credulously supposed indicative of approaching misfortunes: thus, shortly after the king had transferred his residence from Ummerapoorah to Ava, the piasath, or spire, of the royal palace fell; and a few days subsequently intelligence was received of our having captured Rangoon. A curious circumstance is also related of the Maha Bundoolah. When that chief returned from Arra-

can, he halted for several days with his army at Sembeghewn, and passed the time in a succession of amusements peculiar to the Burmahs; such as music, dancing, and wrestling. There, also, he reviewed his army previous to marching on Denobiu; and, one day, had scarcely left his house for that purpose, than it was struck by lightning, and, being merely built of bamboo and mats, instantly consumed. This accident was immediately supposed to predict his defeat; and fortune, in this instance, aided the deception, as he lost not only a battle, but his life.

In many cases it was firmly believed by the Burmahs, on seeing us use theodolites, sextants, and other astronomical instruments, that we were consulting the stars, and were enabled to read into futurity; and the Diana steam-vessel offered a novelty to them which they found it impossible to comprehend, and held in the greatest awe.

The same ridiculous ideas respecting witchcraft prevailed amongst the Sepoys on the eastern frontier at the commencement of the war; and many believed it was perfectly useless to fire at the Burmahs, under the impression that even if the balls passed through their bodies, they would not be killed.

The Burman nobility, it has been before observed, is not hereditary, but depends solely on the will of the sovereign, who confers it by granting certain titles or surnames, the highest of which commence with "Mengie Maha;" whilst those not honoured

with these are considered of an inferior class. There are two emblems of rank which distinguish the aristocracy from the mass of the people; and these varying in form or quality, constitute the different grades of the nobility. The tsaloeh, the first and most honourable of these, is reserved for the highest, who are also entitled to the golden chattahs, which form the general distinction. The tsaloeh consists of a certain number of gold chains, joined together by three or four bosses of chased gold, and suspended from the left shoulder to the right side. The number and quality of these chains denote the rank of the wearer, and they are divided into six classes. The king alone wears twenty-four, the princes of the blood eighteen, the woonghees and highest officers twelve, and the others nine, six, or three. When in undress, the gold chain is thrown aside, and an equal number of white cotton strings, similar to the Brahminical cord, are worn in lieu of it. The same distinctions occur in the gold leaves which encircle the dress helmets, only the superior chieftain being authorized to wear twelve, and the inferior ones none whatever. Rubies, also, are a sign of rank, and only permitted as ornaments in the swords and cups of the very highest dignitaries. The former point out rank very distinctly, those of the subaltern chieftains having merely silver scabbards and handles, whereas the superior officers have theirs made of gold, and often handsomely ornamented with precious stones.

The golden chattah, which forms the next appendage of rank, is not given to a chief of less distinction than the commander of five hundred men, who is allowed to have one borne over him. The number in the train of a superior chief varies, some being allowed four. The royal colour being white, his majesty always uses a white chattah; and as it is contrary to etiquette to sport the golden chattahs within the precincts of the court or royal city, red ones are substituted in their stead, but are thrown aside the moment the owner enters the provinces. These trifling punctilios are carried to a very great extent; even the betel-boxes, saddle-housings, and stirrups, denoting the rank of the possessor. If his situation is of importance, all these articles are of gold; otherwise, of silver, or some baser metal. Everything that belongs to the king is either gold or gilt: his palace at Ava is covered with gilding; and even his titles are expressive of the estimation in which that metal is held: thus he is termed the Golden King. If a communication is made to him, it is styled addressing the golden ear, or golden presence. The same respect is paid to the emblems of the deity, and it is only his temples and the residence of the sovereign that may be beautified with gilding or painting. The gilded war-boats are all belonging either to the king or members of his family; those contributed by villages or towns are quite plain.

From this glaring display of wealth, and from the

lavish manner in which the pagodas are covered with gilding, one might suppose that the country was possessed of much bullion; but, on closer examination, this show of splendour proves to be quite ephemeral, and only calculated to dazzle for a moment: none of the ornaments are of solid gold; much tinsel is used, and it is very certain that, with the exception of the king and royal family, all the rest of the upper classes are very poor.

The rubies of Ava have been much spoken of, but we found it very difficult to purchase any really good ones: they were for the most part much flawed, and fixed at an exorbitant price; and none of them being cut or polished, they did not appear at all to advantage. I have seen exceptions to this rule, and, had we been fortunate enough to see the king at Ava, might have had a better opportunity of forming an accurate opinion on the subject.

There is said to be one of the largest rubies ever known, in the treasury at Ava; where its beauty is increased by placing it in a bowl full of water, and consequently magnifying its lustre. The following story is related of the manner in which it came into the possession of the kings of Ava:—After the sacking of Pegue by Alompra, the unfortunate degraded old king, Beinga Della, whose life was spared by the clemency of the conqueror, was kept in close confinement in Rangoon during the reign of his son, and old age was fast protracting the period of his existence. Still he was an object of jealousy and fear

to the Burman kings; and Shembuah, who had but just suppressed a revolt of the Peguers, was glad of the opportunity it offered to deprive them of their only head, whom he therefore, though innocent, ordered to be executed, in 1769, as a participator in the rebellion.

Awa Bock, or Pagoda Point, was the spot appointed for his execution, and on his way thither he was observed to be constantly twisting what appeared to be a piece of wax in his hand, and this his attendants stated he had done during the whole time he was in prison. After the execution, curiosity induced some of the bystanders to examine the wax, and in it was discovered this ruby, which was of course immediately forwarded to the court.

From the minuteness with which this story is detailed, it is not unlikely to be true; and there is nothing improbable in the idea of the decrepit king, verging on the imbecility of old age, still clinging, with the greatest tenacity, to this valuable gem—the sole relic left him of his former grandeur.

The Burman nobles are treated with the greatest respect by the people; and the sitting posture, it must be observed, is the only one in which an inferior Burmah dares to remain when in the presence of, or addressing, a chief; and if the king passes, his subjects are obliged to prostrate themselves. This custom was so completely at variance with our ideas on the subject, that when we arrived in the country we thought ourselves insulted, on seeing the

Burmahs sit in our presence. In squatting down, they are particularly careful to turn their feet aside; and when presenting anything to a chieftain, they do it in a crouching posture, with averted head, and showing every symptom of awe and respect: yet they will sit close to one of the highest dignitaries and smoke a cigar without being considered at all presumptuous. Their manner is altogether a strange compound of meanness, servility, pride, and independence; to which must be added invariable arrogance when in power, in proportion to the subservience shown before attaining it. They do not use the salaam of India; but when prostrated, and praying, or addressing a chief, join their hands and touch the forehead.

The total disorganization of the Burman authority in those towns where we had an opportunity of gaining a little insight into the manners and customs of the people, deprived us of the means of personally examining the process of their law-transactions; and I have, unfortunately, merely been able to collect a few of the leading features of their jurisprudence. In all petty suits the rayhoon, musghi, and other inferior officers, are authorized to decide without any form of court, and to award trifling punishments; but every official transaction in Ava being quite public, this partakes, in great measure, of the benefits of a regular trial. In cases of a more important nature, the principal provincial officers below the rank of maywoon assemble in the Rhoom, or hall of

justice (by the Europeans called the Rondaye); and there a public examination takes place, which is committed to writing, and transmitted, with the opinion of the tribunal, to the maywoon, who delivers sentence, and whose authority extends to life and death. Whenever property forms a subject of litigation, ten per cent. on the value is paid by both parties, and this they never regain; and, should they be dissatisfied by the decision of the provincial courts, they, by increasing their expenses, may appeal to the king and council. In this instance, the longest purse carries the day, and not unfrequently the lawsuit ends in the ruin of both parties.

The venality of the officers of justice is most publicly known, and many instances are related of their rapacity. Some years since, one of the European residents at Rangoon, having infringed some petty regulation, was condemned by the maywoon to lose his head, and was led out to the place of execution, in company with several Burman culprits, who were likewise to suffer. An Armenian merchant, who had some influence with the maywoon, and was intimately acquainted with the victim, on hearing of the circumstance, instantly proceeded to the maywoon's house with a present of five thousand rupees, and a request that the man's life might be spared. The maywoon received him very affably, and detained him for some time with a trifling conversation when, supposing that sufficient time had elapsed to enable the executioner to perform his office, he granted the

necessary order to release him. Fortunately his deceit, in this instance, was overmatched; for a horse having been kept in readiness by the kind Armenian, the messenger with the reprieve started at full gallop, and arrived at the place of punishment just in time to stay the executioner's hand.

In their mode of executing, the Burmahs show a refinement of cruelty scarcely compatible with the character of man. Although the mutilation of the bodies of our killed or wounded Sepoys at Kykloo, and other instances, enabled us to appreciate the ingenuity with which the Burmahs could vary the mode of torturing their fellow-creatures, we never happened to see the actual process of executing; but I have heard a description of it by an eye-witness, which seems to be quite within the bounds of probability, though, for the credit of human nature, the contrary is to be wished. The scene took place at Rangoon, and the sufferers were men of desperate characters, who merited death. At a short distance from the town, on the road known to the army by the name of the Forty-first Lines, is a small open space, which formerly was railed in; and here all criminals used to be executed. On this occasion several gibbets, about the height of a man, were erected, and a large crowd of Burmahs assembled to feast their eyes on the sanguinary scene that was to follow.

When the criminals arrived, they were tied within the wooden frames, with extended arms and legs,

and the head-executioner going round to each, marked with a piece of chalk, on the side of the men, in what direction his assistant (who stood behind him with a sharpened knife) was to make the incision. On one man he described a circle on the side; another had a straight line marked down the centre of his stomach; a third was doomed to some other mode of death; and some were to be favoured by being decapitated. These preparations being completed, the assistant approached the man marked with a circle, and seizing a knife, plunged it up to the hilt in his side, then slowly and deliberately turning it round, he finished the circle! The poor wretch rolled his eyes in inexpressible agony, groaned, and soon after expired; thus depriving these human fiends of the satisfaction his prolonged torments would have afforded them. The rest suffered in the same manner; and, from the specimens I have seen of mangled corpses, I do not think this account overdrawn. Hanging is a punishment that seldom, if ever, takes place.

The manner in which slighter punishments are made is peculiar to the Burmans, and, as nearly as I can make it out according to our pronunciation, is called "toung." The delinquent is obliged to kneel down, and a man stands over him with a bent elbow and clenched fist. He first rapidly strikes him on the head with his elbow, and then slides it down until his knuckles repeat the blow, the elbow at the same time giving a violent smack on the shoulders.

This is repeated until it becomes a very severe punishment, which may be carried to great excess.

Flogging with a number of long rattans, that cling round the body at every stroke, is also a common practice, and certainly no trifling sort of chastisement. Every person who is placed in confinement is immediately heavily ironed, let his chance of escape be ever so remote: sometimes as many as five pairs of fetters are used, but these merely for great criminals, in case of alarm, or a sudden burst of passion from those by whose order the prisoner is confined.

Several of the European prisoners at Ava, on many occasions, were suddenly laden with irons, without any apparent cause; and some had not their irons taken off during two years they were confined in the capital.

Trial by ordeal is used in Ava, but we had no opportunity of witnessing it.

In alluding to the popular prejudices and superstitions of the Burmahs, I have hitherto omitted mentioning the respect, amounting almost to adoration, paid to the white elephant. The animals of this colour are considered quite sacred, and are treated with all the respect due to the divinity. They have attendants appointed to wait on them; have a superb house allotted for their residence, and are so highly valued that the one which was at Ava, when we arrived at Prome, was immediately moved to Monchaboo.

This unnatural colour of the elephant is supposed

to be caused by some disease affecting the skin, as it is very seldom indeed that an animal thus distinguished is found.

Ava abounds with elephants; and all those in the country are the property of the sovereign. They are not in common use for the purposes of recreation and amusement, none but some of the very highest chieftains being allowed to ride them; but (as we had an occasion of seeing at Denobiu) they are applicable to military purposes. Contrary to the practice in India, the Burman chieftains guide the animals themselves. The Burman elephants are remarkably fine; and those in use are mostly males, which are caught in the vast forests and wildernesses in Munnipoor, Assam, and the Arracan mountains, where the wild herds are very numerous. Almost every kind of Eastern animal is said to exist in Ava; and even the jackals, which it had been supposed were not to be found there, have been seen by some of our officers; but these animals do not appear to be so numerous as in Hindostan, at least their cries at night are seldom heard. Deer and antelopes are common, and traces have been seen of the neilghaie. During our quiet residence at Prome, the inundated state of the country, and constant rains, deprived our sporting characters of much amusement from shooting; but, subsequently, game of every kind was daily to be met with, and was productive of much sport to those who were fond of that kind of recreation.

In thus glancing over the animal productions of Ava, it cannot be expected that a soldier should be very proficient on the subject: his occupations in the field are so numerous, and of such an active description, that he can spare but little time for profound researches into the natural history of the country, even supposing that his talents should qualify him for such an office; and it is, therefore, much to be regretted that the British Government did not send two or three scientific men with this expedition, for the purpose of inquiring into the natural history, geology, and botanical peculiarities of Ava.

Let it be recollected that this empire was totally unknown to us, and that we, as lords of the East, and, consequently, having innumerable opportunities of gaining scientific information, should consider it a duty we owe the polished world, to contribute our quota to the general fund of science and knowledge. In a similar situation the French would have acted very differently, and the public could ere this have possessed an accurate description of the countries of Ava and Pegue. They would have sent a complete society of men of talent, each well versed in his own line; and the result might have been (as with the expedition to Egypt), that our scientific knowledge would have advanced as rapidly as our arms.

The Burman nation, in one instance, is much behind the surrounding states, and this is with regard to its coinage. The nominal currency of the empire

is the tical, which, when of flowered silver is equivalent to 1 rupee, 5 annas, 4 pie, Sicca; and, assuming the rupee at 2*s.*, equals 2*s.* $8\frac{1}{19}d.$ But although the name of tical is applicable to all the coinage of Ava, it differs very much in value, according to the quantity of alloy, the coin being often deteriorated to the amount of 25 per cent. This is not with a view of imposing on the unwary, the baser metal only being current according to its actual value; and in order to ascertain this, a regular trade is pursued by a particular class of silversmiths, who fuse the silver, and determine the quantity of alloy it contains. The tical bears no impression or inscription, and is simply a certain weight of silver, roughly cast in a circular shape, and then passed into circulation. The flowered silver is the least adulterated with alloy. Several of the silversmiths' shops existed at Prome, and we consequently had no difficulty in seeing the process of coining. Before we had been many months quartered there, our rupees had considerably enriched the inhabitants, and many of them possessed large sums; but the moment this was the case, I observed that they invariably melted them down into ticals, probably afraid lest, when the Burman government resumed authority, the British coin should be proof that they had been in our pay.

The process of melting is very simple. The bellows is formed of a bamboo, with a hole at the end for the air to pass through, and a bunch of feathers fitting

tight to the cylinder, acts as a piston, and forces it out. The forge consists of a little charcoal on a clay fireplace; and one man with the bellows is constantly employed in keeping up the fire, whilst another superintends the fusion of the silver in a crucible. When it is separated from the dross, a portion equivalent to the value of a tical, and a due quantity of alloy, are weighed out, and when melted merely poured from the crucible into a small tray prepared to receive them, where the silver, on being cast out, forms its own shape, and is then constituted a tical. There is no gold coin in circulation.

The Burmahs are by no means unskilful in their mode of working and chasing silver and gold; and amongst the cups and betel-boxes of the chieftains I have seen some beautiful specimens of taste and ingenuity. The former are mostly embossed, and the most usual style of ornament is a belt encircling the cup, on which, in fanciful divisions, the signs of the zodiac are represented: the remaining space is filled with a series of ornamental figures, showing great variety of conception; and though it appears that the principal figures in the first instance are punched, they receive the finishing strokes from the hand of the carver. The betel-boxes are executed much in the same style; but some of them are prettily filagreed. There are sometimes four or five in a set; one containing the betel-nut, another the paun-leaf, and a third the chunam, or lime, which enters into the composition of this constant article of consump-

tion. Those who, from their inferior rank, are not allowed to use the precious metals, supply their place with small lackered cups, made of bamboo neatly plaited together and prettily ornamented. The betel-boxes are also made of the same ware, and are sometimes worked with a delicate kind of basket-work. These last are the manufacture of the Shaan provinces; but the kind most in use are fabricated at Pagahm Mew, and several other of the northern towns, whence they are distributed to other parts of the empire.

CHAPTER XII.

Provisioning of the Army—Burman Force assembled under Prince Memiaboo—Shaans—General Cotton reconnoitres Meeayday—Flag of Truce—Colonel Tidy deputed to Meeayday—Armistice signed—Sir A. Campbell proceeds to Neoungbenzeik—Kee Woonghee arrives—Conference on the 2nd—Conversation in the Lootoo—Attweynwoon visits our Camp—Commissioners meet on the 3rd—Discuss the Terms of Peace—And prolong the Armistice—Dinner in the Lootoo—We return to Prome.

The novelty of the objects in and around Prome soon wore off. May, June, and July, passed away without any occurrence taking place of much importance in a political point of view, and we began to find ourselves excessively tired of the quiet, inactive life imposed upon us by the seasons.

It must seem extraordinary that, unlike the preceding year at Rangoon, we should have been allowed to remain perfectly unmolested and quiet in our cantonments, and that no attempts were made to annoy our communication with Rangoon; but this calm on the part of the enemy arose from the actual scarcity of troops, and the difficulty the government had to form an army. We, however, heard that a force was assembling at Pagahm, Sembeghewn, Melloon, and other towns on the river; but the country now being much inundated, there was no probability of any immediate military operations.

This respite from annoyance was diligently em-

ployed by us in making every possible exertion to enable the army to take the field at the earliest period; and the provisioning of the force being the most urgent object, every boat we could obtain was immediately hired, and employed in passing to and from Rangoon. This distance (two hundred and forty miles) they generally performed in a fortnight; and at one time we must have had several hundred canoes in our service. Without the assistance of the Peguers we could have done nothing; our own boats were too few in number even to supply provisions for the daily wants of the army; and it was solely owing to the good will and fidelity of our new allies, that we succeeded at last in conveying six months' provisions to Prome. Their little fleets of fifty and sixty boats were generally made also to serve as a mode of transport to the reinforcements we required; and two or three men being placed in each boat, they answered at once as a guard during the trip, and as an addition to our force. An attempt was likewise made to bring some light brigs as high as Prome, and several succeeded in reaching Denobiu: it was, however, found that the force of the stream was so great, that unless the wind blew with great violence, it was almost impossible to stem it. Two of the small gun-brigs, the *Emma* and *Robert Spankie*, arrived at Prome, but after a very long passage; and the idea of employing others was consequently abandoned.

At the end of July Sir A. Campbell proceeded in

the *Diana* to Rangoon, for the purpose of accelerating the different preparations, but only remained two or three days. On his return, the steam-vessel, though having her utmost power on, was very nearly lost a little above Sarawah, the eddy having whirled her round two or three times, and it was only her bulk, and the force of the steam, that prevented her going down; but a small boat which came within the influence of this whirlpool disappeared with its whole crew. This kind of vortex is often to be met with, and may easily be accounted for, when it is recollected what a vast body of water rushes down the bed of the Irrawaddy during the rains, tearing up trees, banks, and even washing away islands by its irresistible fury.

The army at Prome had further been reinforced by his Majesty's thirteenth light infantry (which, after taking Bassien and advancing to Lamina, had returned to Rangoon), and the thirtieth and thirty-eighth regiments of Madras Native infantry,—making our troops amount to between five and six thousand men, with a good train of artillery; so that now, should there be occasion for an encounter with the enemy, our force, in a numerical point of view, was superior to what it had been for many months, there being as yet but few men in the hospitals.

At the commencement of August the General received certain intelligence that the advanced corps of the main army, under Prince Memiaboo, had advanced to Meeayday, and were there entrenching themselves. Like the ancient Romans, the Burmahs,

it must be observed, never take up a position without immediately fortifying it, either by digging circular trenches and surrounding them outside with an abatis, or, if the materials are procurable, by erecting a stockade. Pickets are then thrown out a certain distance beyond the main body, and a chain of scouts pushed forward to give the earliest intimation of the enemy's approach. In occupying Meeayday it was supposed the Burmahs intended to place it on the footing of a place *d'armes,* where they might impede our advance, should they fail in a general attack.

The force now assembled by the enemy was composed, it was said, of 66,666 men, which number had been pronounced a fortunate one by the sooth-sayers; and, to render success still more certain, three Shaan ladies of high rank accompanied it, whose magic power was such that they offered to render our shot perfectly harmless by throwing water on the balls! They, alas! poor creatures, found their necromantic art of but little avail subsequently, in warding off evil from themselves. The Shaans, who now, to the amount of fifteen thousand men, formed part of the Burman army, were considered very fine troops; and, not having hitherto been engaged with us, felt certain of success.

In their appearance and dress they differ materially from the Burmahs. Their features exactly resemble those of the Chinese: their stature is small, but they are muscular and well-made; their heads are shaved except one tuft on the back, which

is allowed to grow and is plaited; and the custom of tattooing is not followed by them. Instead of the Burman loonghee, they wear loose trowsers reaching to the knee, and made of light-blue nankeen: a black cotton jacket, or a red nankeen vest, forms the upper garment; and a white straw hat, of beautiful texture, is the covering for the head.

The Shaans occupy the range of country situated between Siam, China, and Ava, and are partly under the dominion of the former kingdom; but those chieftains, or chobwahs, who owe allegiance and pay tribute to the Burman king, were obliged, in this instance, to obey the regal summons to assemble their followers, and unite under the banners of the empire.

It is really difficult to foresee where the career of the British arms will stop: in the course of one year we had now successively stirred several nations against us, of whose political existence we were scarcely aware; and it does not seem improbable that, ere many years, we shall be invading the Chinese empire. When at Prome, we already began to speculate on such an occurrence, and calculated the number of marches from Ava to Yunan: and it would seem that the Chinese themselves were not quite certain with regard to our intentions, orders having been sent to the governors of the frontier towns, directing them to place their forts in a state of repair, as the English had defeated the Burmahs

in several engagements, and were advancing towards the dominions of the celestial empire.

On the 13th of August, Brigadier-general Cotton, with a small escort, proceeded in the *Diana* steam-boat up the Irrawaddy, for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy's position. He arrived at Meeayday on the 15th, and, near the town, observed the Burman army ranged in line to the extent of a mile and a half down the bank of the river. When he passed up, they opened a battery of sixteen pieces of cannon upon him; and, as he wished the enemy to deploy his whole force, he directed the gun-boats that accompanied him to return the fire, when it appeared there were between sixteen and twenty thousand men: about four hundred boats were also lying under the walls of Meeayday.

This certainty of the approach of the enemy afforded us good reason to believe that affairs would again assume a warlike aspect: it was, nevertheless, supposed the Burmahs were tired of the war, and that they were merely temporizing until the end of the rains, when, should the unhealthy season have much diminished our force, their army would have a better chance of attacking us, or, at all events, enable them to obtain milder terms than if they were totally defenceless. Anxious, however, to terminate this tedious war, Sir A. Campbell, in the early part of August, had transmitted an admonitory letter to the court of Ava, in which he stated that it would be the

last time he should address the Burman ministry. This letter reached its destination, and created a great sensation, as it seems no other communication from us had ever been received; and, in order that no false interpretation might be made of the contents, it was given separately to each of the prisoners, for translation. The different versions being very similar, it was determined to act upon it; and directions were in consequence sent down to the Burman army, which gave rise subsequently to some most interesting scenes.

On the evening of the 6th of September, a war-boat, bearing a flag of truce, made its appearance at our advanced posts on the Irrawaddy, and was immediately passed down to Prome: in it were two chieftains and their attendants, who had been sent with a letter from the Burman General to Sir A. Campbell, stating, that his letter had been reecived, and the king's brother empowered to treat; and requesting the British General would propose the terms of peace. At the same time, the deputies said they were desired verbally to ask the British General for a truce of forty days; and to request that, as a proof of his wish to arrange everything amicably, he would depute two British officers to the Burman camp, who might return with these messengers, and arrange the terms of an armistice.

To this proposition Sir A. Campbell willingly assented; and, although we had not reason to place much trust in their protestations of friendship, and

that it seemed doubtful even how far it would be safe to trust the persons of British officers in the keeping of men so proverbially destitute of good faith; yet, as they had confided in us, which implied a knowledge of the laws of nations, and that this proceeding evidently emanated from the highest authorities, the General selected for the mission Lieutenant-colonel Tidy, C. B., Deputy Adjutant-general, and Lieutenant Smith, R. N., escorted by a man-of-war's boat, without her gun. Previous to leaving Prome, the Burman chieftains went up to the Shoe-shandoh pagoda to offer their prayers; and, whilst the Colonel was preparing for his trip, walked about the town and our lines with perfect unconcern. They were neither of them men of high rank: the first, named Lameinzerai, since figured very much as a messenger during the negociations, and was rewarded for his exertions by the honour of using a gilt umbrella; the other was a chief of a war-boat, or a hundred men, and was habited in a most curious velvet coat, much in the cut of the last century, and adorned with a profusion of bad gold lace.

On the morning of the 8th, the chiefs and Colonel Tidy departed, leaving us at the highest pitch of expectation respecting the result of the mission; and in a few days we heard a most satisfactory account of his proceedings.

On the 12th he arrived near Meeayday, and was met by several gilt war-boats, which escorted him

up to the fort, where two thousand men, well dressed, and armed with muskets and bayonets, were drawn up to receive him. Several bands of music struck up their deafening clamour whilst he proceeded to a temporary house which had been prepared for his reception; and this first essay at amicable intercourse bore the most favourable appearance.

An interview took place between him and the Kee Woonghee, who held the command there; and by them everything was settled with regard to the armistice. Colonel Tidy and Lieutenant Smith signing on behalf of the British; and Attweynwoon Mengie Maha Meeha Menla Rajah and Woondock Meeha Seasee See Keeyah for Sadoh Mengie Maha Meingoon Kee Woonghee. The terms were as follows:—

"1st. Cessation of hostilities from the date of the armistice to the 17th of October.

"2nd. The first minister of the King, with full powers, will meet the British authorities fully qualified by their Government, half way between the two armies, on the 2nd of October, to enter into negotiations for the re-establishment of peace and amity.

"3rd. A line of demarcation to be drawn between the two armies, commencing at Comma, on the west bank of the Irrawaddy, and continuing along the road to Tongho: the respective parties engaging to prevent their troops passing the said line, and further giving assurances that all detachments shall be

called to their own side. No forward movement to be made by either party before the 17th of October.

"4th. Two officers from each army to meet on the 23rd of September, to mark off the ground for the encampment of the respective chiefs; and to make arrangements preparatory to the meeting of the commissioners.

"5th. The state of the Prime Minister absolutely requiring that he should not move without a train of five hundred men with fire-arms and five hundred with swords, the British Commander will be attended with an equal number, should he deem it expedient."

The village of Neoungbenzeik, on the left bank of the Irrawaddy, twenty-five miles above Prome, was the spot appointed for the conferences; and thither two officers proceeded on the 23rd, and, in concert with the Burman authorities, selected two spots of ground, a thousand yards apart, as the situation of the respective camps. In the centre, the Burmahs agreed to erect a lootoo, or hall of audience, where the meeting might take place equidistant from both camps; and here, for the present, our communication with the Burmahs ceased.

Notwithstanding this glimpse of peace, our warlike preparations were carried on with the greatest activity in the British lines, and every one was exerting himself to the utmost to procure means of transport for his private baggage. All the bullocks in the vicinity of Prome were brought in and sold at the

rate of from 50 to 75 rupees* a pair; and orders had been given to the different musghis to send in all their cattle at a fixed price, for the use of the commissariat and artillery. The Burman bullocks are very fine and powerful, but not so well adapted for carrying as those of Hindostan. As draught animals they are not to be surpassed, that being the mode in which the Burmahs use them; but we did not experience much difficulty in training them, as from their youth they are taught to carry their driver when going out to feed; and it at first afforded us no slight amusement on seeing squadrons of this novel sort of cavalry issuing from the gates of Prome. A number of Burman carts also were procured; but these did not seem likely to prove very serviceable, as their construction was weak and insecure. Their make is very simple: the wheels are not formed with spokes, but of three pieces of wood fitted into a circular shape, and having in the centre a hollow bamboo, answering for the nave, through which runs a wooden axle. The body is merely a platform resting on this, and fastened to the pole which supports the yoke, and over the whole is a thatched covering. Should one of these break down when a Burmah is driving, he requires no other instrument to repair it than his dâh, or knife—the forest supplies him with wood for an axle or pegs, and the bark of the bamboo cut into strips answers as a ligament. The bullocks are guided with reins; and the driver,

* 8*l.* or 9*l.*

sitting in front of the cart, will put them at full gallop and drive them over the most difficult ground with the greatest activity and skill. It is surprising how much can be done with such frail materials; and of their value an idea may be conceived, since, for a cart of the best kind, we only paid ten or twelve rupees.

With these resources, whatever might be the result of the approaching negotiations, we were quite provided with the requisites for a march; and we felt great satisfaction on recollecting that our situation this year would be princely compared with the miserable plight we were in when marching from Rangoon.

On the 22nd, his Excellency Commodore Sir J. Brisbane arrived at Prome, with the boats of his Majesty's ship the Boadicea; a very valuable addition to our maritime force, which would now amount to about two hundred British sailors.

The arrangements made by Sir A. Campbell, with respect to the troops he intended for his escort to Neoungbenzeik, were, that all the corps present should send a detachment, so that our adversaries might have an opportunity of viewing the enemies they had to contend with. The force consisted of one hundred and fifty Governor-general's Body-guard, dismounted; three hundred and sixty of his Majesty's troops, fully armed; and the remainder Sepoys and artillery: the whole under Lieutenant-colonel Godwin, accompanied by one of

the bands and a set of bugles. The army was now so shabbily dressed that it required no little ingenuity to give the purple-stained jackets, which once had been scarlet, a smart appearance; and, in any other place but Ava, we should have made but a sorry figure in point of dress, had not the men industriously succeeded in giving themselves a very spruce look, considering the few resources at their disposal.

We embarked in the flotilla on the 30th, accompanied by the steam-boat, with Sir A. Campbell's little brig Emma in tow, and arrived at Neoungbenzeik on the 1st, where we encamped on the ground previously marked out for us.

The scenery on each side of the Irrawaddy, during our sail up the river, was very picturesque, particularly near Napadee, where a range of hills, richly covered with foliage, rose abruptly from the water's edge. Two or three pagodas could be seen on the most elevated points of the heights; and several villages, which had been already deserted, in consequence of the approach of the Burman army. Neoungbenzeik retained no traces of having been a village, save one or two groves of plantain-trees; but the ground allotted for the occupation of the respective troops had been cleared from jungle, so as to leave a small plain about half a mile long, a quarter of a mile broad, and shaded by a fine grove of trees. At one end of this the Burmahs had erected a temporary square of huts, having the houses for the chieftains in the centre; and midway

they had built a shed, with an elevated floor, where it was intended the conference should take place. As yet, the Burman cantonment was unoccupied; we, however, remained on the ground which had been carefully marked by the Burmahs with long bamboos surmounted by tufts of straw, and where they had also constructed a comfortable hut for the accommodation of their friends Colonel Tidy and Lieutenant Smith, a mark of attention which could scarcely be expected from them.

In the evening, a small party of officers strolled towards the Burman camp, near which we were met by a chief, dressed in a velvet jacket and silver lace, who appeared to be in command of a picket: he was exceedingly polite; but as we were fearful of being considered intruders, being beyond our own bounds, wished him a good evening, and retired. Shortly afterwards, Lameinzerai made his appearance with the Rayhoon of Rangoon, bringing a communication from the Kee Woonghee respecting the time of meeting on the morrow, which it was agreed should be at noon, and each chief to be accompanied by fourteen officers and a hundred men. Early the next morning we saw several war-boats pulling down the river; the cantonments also appeared to be filling; and, before long, another message was brought by Lameinzerai, stating that the Kee Woonghee begged the meeting might be deferred till two o'clock, as he could not be in readiness at an earlier hour. This was agreed to; and a little

before that time, the Rayhoon of Rangoon, and another chief, entered our camp, for the purpose of escorting the general to the lootoo; and he in like manner deputed Colonel Tidy and Lieutenant Smith to conduct the Burman chieftains thither. The British line was ordered under arms, and the Governor-general's body-guard formed Sir A. Campbell's guard of honour.

At two o'clock, the General, Commodore, and the principal officers of the staff and navy, preceded by the Burman messengers, left the camp in full dress, and proceeded towards the lootoo; and, at the same moment, the Burman procession emerged from the cantonment.

Its first appearance was splendid; it seemed like a moving mass of gold; which, by reflecting the rays of the sun, prevented us at first from distinctly seeing of what it was composed; but as it slowly advanced, we gradually could perceive, under a canopy of gilt umbrellas, Colonel Tidy and Lieutenant Smith, walking arm in arm with two figures dressed in the most gorgeous and extraordinary manner: they were covered with golden ornaments and embroidery, and behind them were fourteen others, habited in a similar mode, whilst the rest of the group consisted of followers bearing gilt chattahs and other paraphernalia of a Burman nobleman. It is impossible to describe the sensations with which we viewed this extraordinary scene: there was something so unexpected in the sudden appearance of this

brilliant procession in the midst of these wilds, that when I gazed at the slow, measured pace with which they advanced, and at the supernatural height given them by their strange apparel, my mind involuntarily recurred to those tales of fiction related of the East, and I could almost have fancied myself an inhabitant of Faëry-land, and viewing an assemblage of magicians.

When they approached the lootoo, Sir A. Campbell also advanced, and on meeting the Kee Woonghee, they shook hands, and walked arm in arm into the room, where rows of chairs had been ranged opposite each other, on which the two parties seated themselves. On the Kee Woonghee's right sat the Lamein Woon, who had been appointed joint-commissioner with him; there were also the Mengee Maha, Menla Rajah (attweynwoon), the Patheinwoon, governor of Bassien, the Pee, or Peeayewoon, governor of Prome, the Assaywoon, or lord treasurer, the Maywoon of the capital, and several other chieftains of the highest rank; and, in a semicircle, squatted on the ground behind them, were their attendants.

This was the first time we had held colloquial intercourse with any of the Burman aristocracy, and they proved themselves extremely easy and polite in their manner and address; the Kee Woonghee, in particular, was a very superior-looking man, with a much darker complexion than the rest of his colleagues. He was about forty years of age; his features were good, but not much adorned by a small,

straggling beard, and the constant use of betel had disfigured his mouth. When not taking an active part in the conversation, he glanced his eyes around with a look of curiosity or suspicion, and appeared not to let the slightest incident escape his notice. His head-dress was a round cap with a broad brim, made of *papier maché*, gilt, and surmounted with a golden spire ornamented with rubies and small gold leaves, which vibrated at the slightest touch, and were most delicately executed. Round the outside of the cap was a wreath, or crown, of gold leaves four inches high, interspersed with the smaller imitation of foliage; two rows of rubies encircled the upper part of the cap, and from each side hung two embroidered flaps, intended to guard the ears from injury. Over his shoulders he wore a kind of tippet, with three lappels richly embroidered with gold, and having the resemblance of a cuirass; and pendent to it, in front, were three flaps of the same materials reaching halfway down the body, whilst from his back a curious piece of embroidery protruded, and gave him the appearance of being humpbacked. His coat was of green velvet trimmed with gold lace, reaching as low as the knees; and under this was a vest of blue silk and gold, touching his ancles. A handsome gold chain (the tsaloeh of twelve links) fell from his left shoulder across the body, and in his hand he carried a gold sword richly adorned with rubies. This dress is considered the war costume of ceremony; the full court dress is far more graceful

and elegant, but this we had no opportunity of seeing. The personal attendants of the Kee Woonghee were habited in the common dress of the country; one bore his spitting-basin, which was immediately placed by his side when he seated himself; another held the gold betel and paun boxes, which he now and then presented in a crouching position; and a third carried a gold drinking-cup richly chased with the twelve signs of the zodiac, and a jar of cold water wrapped in a plantain-leaf to keep it cool. The costume of the other chieftains, though very similar in make, was not so highly ornamented as that of the Kee Woonghee.

On commencing the conversation, the latter chief said that he had brought his sword because he understood the English officers intended bringing theirs; but this was immediately explained to him by Sir A. Campbell, as being such a necessary part of our dress, that we could not dispense with it. He then cast rather a suspicious eye towards the body-guard, and made the observation that his own followers were unarmed; when the general immediately sent his escort away, and reserved only the officers of his suite. This idea of the Kee Woonghee's plainly shows what a slight opinion he had of our honour, and he evidently must have attributed some sinister design to Sir A. Campbell, particularly as we since heard that instead of his stipulated escort of one thousand men, six thousand were actually concealed in the jungle, ready to assist in case of

a rupture. After a profusion of compliments had been mutually exchanged, the Burman commissioners begged that the discussion of business might be deferred till next day, and that the present meeting should be solely devoted to private friendship. They inquired very affectionately after the health of our King; asked what was the news of the day in England; and, after complimenting Sir A. Campbell, said, "Did you ever see two such great men as us before?" The Kee Woonghee expressed a wish that friendship might be established between the British and Burman nations, and hoped that the officers of the two armies would call on each other and become acquainted. The meeting then broke up, the Lamein Woon having suddenly fainted from the effects of heat; and it was agreed that they should meet again at the same hour on the morrow.

In the evening several of the Burman chieftains came into our camp, and three of the principal went on board the *Emma*, whilst Sir A. Campbell was at dinner. Amongst these was the Attweynwoon Moungkyne, a shrewd and intelligent little man, who was said to be possessed of much influence at court. On his way to the brig he saw some soldiers with figures on their breastplates, and immediately turning round to his companions, informed them that it was, no doubt, the number of the regiment: he thought, indeed, that he had acquired much proficiency in the language, being able to write English

cyphers, and to multiply 4 by 3,—a feat he showed on paper whenever he had an opportunity. They sat for some time in Colonel Tidy's hut; and a sketch I had drawn of the Kee Woonghee being shown to them, they professed themselves much delighted with it; but the Pee Woon remarked that the complexion was too fair, and, opening his vest, pointed to his own skin as the proper colour. They had thrown aside their velvet dresses, and were now wearing light muslin, or a kind of brick-coloured jackets, the common loonghee, and cotton threads, instead of the tsaloeh. In meeting or parting with us they invariably shook hands, and in a moment adapted themselves to any of our customs which were foreign to the Burman: altogether, their conduct was far more polished than we had been led to expect.

Some of the British officers also went into the Burman cantonment, with Sarkies as their interpreter, and were most hospitably received by the chieftains, who entered into a lively conversation with them, and, amongst other remarks, asked Sarkies the meaning of Sir A. Campbell's numerous ribands and crosses; which he answered by saying, that the general had received one for every king he had conquered! One of the party having remarked that he had not seen many favourable specimens of beauty amongst the Burman women since he had arrived in the country, was replied to by the Kee Woonghee with a phrase which certainly does him

credit:—"No!" said he; "all good people are where they ought to be in times of trouble and danger—gathered round their king!"

The next morning the commissioners assembled with the same ceremony, but only seven persons were allowed to be actually present during the discussion of the articles of peace. The Burman deputies consisted of the seven highest in rank, but the remainder were ranged round the lootoo, within hearing, publicity being always attendant on every Burman transaction.

The terms then proposed by Sir A. Campbell were, that Arracan, Mergui, and Tavoy, should be ceded to us; Assam and Munnipoor declared independent under our protection, and the payment of two crores of rupees*, as an indemnification for the expenses of the war. On these subjects a great deal of discussion arose: the Burmahs owned themselves the aggressors; but said it was all caused by two petty chiefs; and that it was a pity the two nations should go to war about such trifles. They demurred a good deal with respect to the cession of Arracan, which they said was an appanage of one of the younger branches of the royal family, and could not be alienated from the crown without great dishonour; but the payment of such a large sum as two crores of rupees they considered as absolutely impossible. Finding, however, that Sir A. Campbell would not abate in his demands, they changed their

* 2,000,000*l.*

tone, and said they came quite unprepared to answer such propositions; and that they must refer the points in question to the court of Ava. They said, that, in the Chinese war, affairs had been terminated with mutual satisfaction, and without any sacrifices or exactions on either side; and that they were disposed to make peace with us on the same terms. As a proof of their goodwill, they promised to send down the English and American prisoners, and even offered to give a written promise to that effect. To this latter proposal Sir A. Campbell replied, that he placed such implicit confidence in the word of men so honourable as the Burman commissioners were, that a verbal promise was quite sufficient; and he, in return, agreed to restore the Burman chiefs of Tavoy, Mergui, and Cheduba, whom we had taken prisoners and detained at Calcutta. Finally, the Burman authorities begged that the truce might be prolonged until the 3rd of November, to enable them to refer the draft of the treaty to the sovereign at Ava. This was willingly granted; for, if they did not infringe it, we should be unmolested during the intervening time; and our operations would not be in the least delayed, as the country could not be sufficiently dried to admit of our advancing before the end of November.

The conference then broke up, Sir A. Campbell having previously invited the Kee Woonghee, Lamein Woon, and others, to dine with him in the lootoo, at twelve o'clock on the following day. The Burmahs,

twelve in number, were punctual in their attendance, and soon made themselves quite at home, drinking wine, and eating of everything at the table. They said, that the meeting of the chiefs of two hostile nations at a public entertainment in the midst of war, was an extraordinary proof of good faith and confidence, and worthy of two such great and civilised empires, who, it was hoped, would never again encounter each other in arms. The attweynwoon was more poetical in his language, and added, that the sun and moon were under an eclipse; but that, when peace was restored, they would shine in the astonished world with renewed brilliancy and splendour! At the conclusion of the repast, after many professions of friendship, the guests departed, having previously requested that two officers might be sent to Melloon, to pay a visit to Prince Memiaboo, and they would depute two chiefs to accompany the General to Prome. This being assented to, Brigadier-general M'Creagh and Lieutenant Smith prepared to join the Burman chieftains; but, when on the point of starting, some frivolous though polite objections offered by them, prevented this measure being pursued, and we bade each other farewell—they proceeding to Melloon, and we returning to Prome, highly gratified by the interesting scene we had witnessed, but varying in our opinions whether peace or war would be the ultimate result of this our first conference with the Burman diplomatists.

CHAPTER XIII.

Depredations of Marauders—Proceedings on Eastern Frontier—Letter from the Burman Commissioners—Armistice expires—Disposition of our Army—Shaans occupy Wattegaun—Colonel M'Dowall proceeds to attack them—is killed—the Sepoys retreat—Advance of the Burman Army—Colonel Godwin detached—Mr. Robertson arrives—The Burmahs attack Padaong Mew, and are repulsed—The Army leaves Cantonments—Action at Sembike—Shaans defeated, and Maha Nemiou killed—Action on the Heights of Napadee—Burman Centre and Right Wing dispersed.

Many days had not elapsed since the meeting at Neoungbenzeik, before several complaints were made by the villagers, that numerous detachments from the Burman army were moving about within our line of demarcation, and plundering the unfortunate inhabitants.

Sir A. Campbell immediately sent a letter to the Kee Woonghee, complaining of these outrages, and desiring that the parties might be recalled, else he would send a detachment to drive them off.

The latter, in reply, assured the General that they were bands of robbers, or "demiahs," unconnected with the army; and that he had issued orders to the chiefs under his command, to put a stop to their ravages as far as lay in their power. The evil, however, continuing to increase instead of diminishing, Sir A. Campbell directed two detachments, under Lieutenant-colonel Parlby and Captain Ross,

to proceed in search of the marauders, and expel them from our territory; and, at the same time, wrote to the Kee Woonghee, acquainting him with the cause of this movement, and explaining that the parties would not proceed beyond our line of demarcation. An answer was received of the most amicable kind, assuring the General that his measures did not afford the least umbrage; and the detachments having proceeded to the points where it was said the banditti had assembled, found they had retired, taking with them the plunder of several villages.

Our communication with Arracan overland, by the Tongho pass (a narrow pathway leading from Padaong-Mew to the village of Tongho, over the Yomadoung mountains), had now become frequent: an attempt had been made, in June, to send a small party of Sepoys over the pass, but the route proved impracticable for cattle, and we gave up the idea of making it serviceable in any other way than as a medium of transmitting despatches by Burmahs.

The last information received through this channel informed us that the whole of Brigadier-general Morrison's army having been completely disorganized by sickness, the Bengal European regiment and three battalions of Sepoys had been ordered to relieve it, and with a portion of these Colonel Richards, the commanding officer, purposed moving on to Aeng, and from thence to the Irrawaddy at Sembeghewn; but that officer having been obliged to return to Bengal in consequence of ill health, Colonel Stew-

art assumed the command, and, as we understood, entertained the same intentions. The Aeng road over the Arracan mountains was said to be a very good one, but it had not yet been explored by any officer of the Arracan army. The remaining route from Sembeghewn to Talāk had been reconnoitred by a detachment from Colonel Morrison's force under Colonel Bucke, who did not proceed very far; but this pass, it seems, was not practicable, and no further attempt was made by him to unite with us. The army under General Shuldam was in like manner completely unsuccessful in an attempt to penetrate through the jungles of Cachar: the rains, muddy state of the country, and impenetrable forests, rendered every effort nugatory; and the capture of Munnipoor was left to Gumbeer Singh, the ex-rajah, who, with eight hundred of his own followers, accompanied by Lieutenant Pemberton, of the quarter-master-general's department, pushed through the jungle, and, after a slight skirmish, took possession of his capital; thus depriving the Burmahs of this portion of their Western conquests, though not offering any material diversion in our favour. In Assam, Colonel Richards succeeded in obtaining possession of the capital, after a trifling resistance; and with Rungpore fell all authority of the Burmahs in that province: but here the same insuperable difficulties presented themselves to prevent any further movement towards Ava; and thus the whole force of the Burman empire was left, undivided and unre-

strained by any diversion in its rear, to fall upon our small army at Prome.

The crisis was now rapidly approaching which was to decide the fate of Ava; and, from the intelligence given by our scouts, there was little doubt but that war would again blaze forth. Detachments were constantly leaving the Burman lines for the purpose of forming marauding parties in our rear; and the small bands which had been hovering about our front, now began to assume a more formidable aspect, and to be evidently acting in concert with the main body. It appears that, on returning to the Burman camp at Meeayday, the chieftains who had treated for peace industriously circulated reports that we were tired of the war, because a large fleet of Cochin Chinese (to whom application had been made for aid) had arrived at the mouth of the river and blockaded us, and that we were consequently afraid our retreat would be intercepted.

This tale was also repeated to the king; who, not having the least intention of conceding any territory to us, instantly sent orders to the chieftains with the army, to make an immediate attack, and "annihilate the strangers."

Our information on this subject was so circumstantial, that, on the 20th of October, Sir A. Campbell felt confident of the rapid approach of the Burman army; no less than seven thousand men, under Chuddah Woon, and other distinguished chiefs, having crossed the line of demarcation, and

burned some villages. Anxious, however, to ascertain beyond doubt the sentiments of the Burman chieftains, he addressed a letter to the Kee Woonghee, on the 24th, requesting to know whether the English prisoners had been brought down from Ava, as his colleagues and he had faithfully promised; and also, if he had learned the result of the reference made to his court. The answer came on the 29th, and solved all doubts on the subject.

No longer addressing Sir A. Campbell in the polite, amicable tone which marked the former intercourse, this letter savoured not a little of impertinence and defiance. It was from the Kee Woonghee and Lamein Woon, and stated, that they had met the English at Neoungbenzeik, with the wish of bringing the war to an amicable conclusion, and that sincerity and fair dealing had marked all their actions; but that we, on the contrary, had no desire for peace, but were guilty of breach of faith, and duplicity; inasmuch that, while we were making professions of amity, ships were daily coming to Rangoon with soldiers, and we had sent Sepoys from Cheduba to Sandowey. In conclusion they added, "If you sincerely want peace, and the re-establishment of our friendship, according to Burman custom, empty your hands of what you have, and then, if you ask it, we will be on friendly terms with you, and forward a petition for the release of the English prisoners, and send them down to you. However, if, after the termination of the armistice

between us, you show any inclination to renew your demands for money in payment of your expenses, or any territory from us, you are to consider our friendship at an end. This is Burman custom!"

This letter was quite explicit; and a pretty just notion may be derived from it of Burman proficiency in diplomatic cunning. It was now evident they had not the slightest intention of making any further concession at Neoungbenzeik, than (according to one of their own haughty phrases) that of allowing us to retire from the country unmolested. I would observe, however, in justice to the Kee Woonghee, that he entertained a better idea of the obligations of a truce than could have been supposed. His orders from court to attack the English were peremptory; but when urged to do so, notwithstanding the armistice, he replied, "No! although it may cost me my life, it is better that one individual should suffer, than that the lives of thousands should be lost by such a proceeding." He kept his word; and it appears that those chiefs who had passed the boundary did so on their own authority, when they heard the orders from the king.

The intelligence of the approach of the Burman army soon spread throughout the country, and, daily, hundreds of Burmahs, with their wives and children in waggons, came and bivouacked within our lines; so that before many days, there was not an inhabited village within fifty miles of Prome, whilst that town was swarming with inhabitants. In order to prevent

any danger from fire, the thatch was taken off the houses, a measure often enforced during the Burman sway in the dry season; for, although each house is obliged to have several jars of water standing on the roof, that may be broken in an instant, and that a crooked pole is attached to each for the purpose of pulling off the thatch, fires are very frequent and destructive.

The peasantry thus flocking to us for protection, and leaving the country in the vicinity of the Burman army quite deserted, placed our enemies in a very similar situation to that of ours in the preceding year; but this measure was attended with very great loss to the unfortunate villagers, who were obliged to leave their harvest of rice standing, although just arrived at the maturity sufficient for reaping; and I subsequently saw many fields either levelled by their own ripeness, or crushed by the herds of cattle belonging to the villages which the inhabitants had not time to secure.

The Burman plan of attack we understood was to get in our rear and cut off our communication, at the same time pressing us in front, and attacking Padaong Mew. In order to foil the latter intention, Sir A. Campbell detached his Majesty's Royal regiment to Yewndoung, twenty miles up the river, where the road to Padaong Mew led through a range of hills; and sent a hundred of the Royals, and as many of the twenty-sixth Madras Native infantry, under Captain Deane, to occupy Padaong, where he

threw up a small stockade, which made the position tenable.

The truce had now expired; and, on the 5th of November, a marauding party of the enemy attacked the men who were watching our cattle when grazing, wounded several, and carried off many head of bullocks. The alarm being speedily given, Captain Dyke, with the Body-guard, went in pursuit, and overtook the marauders at about six miles from camp, when he killed a considerable number of the depredators, and recovered almost all the cattle. In order, however, more effectually to cover our position from such annoyance, the Commander of the forces posted a battalion of native infantry at Zeeoop, eight miles from town, where we were making a road to cross the ford of the Nowwein river; and sent the thirty-eighth regiment of Madras Native infantry to Shombulah, three miles beyond Issay Mew, leaving the eighteenth Madras Native infantry at the Cone, to form a *point d'appui* on which either corps might retire if pressed. The ground in front of our lines was cleared from jungle, and some batteries and breastworks were thrown up; so that, in case the enemy suddenly advanced, we should be quite prepared to receive him.

This was a measure which, notwithstanding the ardour shown at first, did not appear to be in immediate contemplation, the object of the Burmahs at present being to cut off our communication with Rangoon; and they, accordingly, pushed down a

detachment as far as Peinghee and Keangain, the musghi of which went over to his countrymen. The right wing of the Burman army, under the Chuddah Woon, had taken post on the right bank of the river: the centre, thirty thousand strong, commanded by the Kee Woonghee, with the Royal Guard, under Keoukeoungbo, slowly advanced down the left bank; and the left wing, composed of ten thousand Shaans, five thousand Burmahs and Cassayers, and six hundred cavalry, moved towards Wattegaun, a small village twenty miles from Prome, where about two thousand five hundred men had already taken post. The latter portion of the army was commanded by Maha Nemiou, an experienced veteran general, more than seventy years of age, in whose talents and conduct the greatest confidence was placed. To the eastward, Sykia Woonghee had assembled a force at Tongho; it was supposed, with the intention of threatening Rangoon and Pegue.

The latter town had not been visited by our troops since December, 1824; but the inhabitants had returned to their houses, were perfectly quiet, and, by intercourse with Rangoon, found that our protection would shield them from the exactions of small parties of Burmahs, which were constantly pillaging them. They therefore, in July or August, sent down to Rangoon, requesting that a force of British troops might be sent up to protect them; for which purpose they brought boats for two hundred men, who were immediately granted. Subsequently, Sir A. Camp-

bell, deeming the occupation of Tongho necessary, as that town was the key to Pegue from the upper provinces, directed the Madras European regiment, and the third and thirty-fourth Madras light infantry to assemble at Pegue, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Pepper, and make preparations to advance, the moment the country was sufficiently dry.

At this period, his Majesty's forty-fifth regiment and two native battalions were in garrison at Rangoon, and reinforcements were daily expected from Madras; consequently there was quite sufficient force to repel any attack in that quarter.

A short time after the truce had expired, a small party of the Royals, in the gun-boats, was sent up the river to reconnoitre, and had not proceeded very far, when they saw a large force of Burmahs erecting fortifications on the bank of the river. They were standing at their guns, with lighted matches ready to fire: but seeing that the British did not commence cannonading, they likewise abstained; and a chief with a gilt chattah came down to the beach, and expressed a wish to speak to the English officer. The boat immediately pulled in shore, and took him on board; when the Burmah professed a great deal of friendship for us, and said he had received positive orders not to fire unless we were the aggressors. He then partook of some refreshment, and left the boat. This mark of confidence was quite novel; and the circumstance of a Burman force allowing the

boats to remain under their works without firing, appeared equally extraordinary; but we ascertained, afterwards, that this was merely a *ruse de guerre* to prevent our attacking their works, as they were in an unfinished state.

A few days subsequent to this, a small detachment from the twenty-second, at Zeeoop, met with a picket of Shaans, not far from their camp, which after exchanging volleys retired: this, however, indicated that the time for action was approaching; and, fortunately, our preparations for advancing were nearly completed. The country was rapidly drying; and, on the arrival of his Majesty's eighty-seventh regiment from Rangoon, it was intended we should break up from quarters; when, if the enemy did not attack us, we would be obliged to seek him.

Previous to this occurring, it was judged necessary to dislodge the Shaans (who, it was said, to the amount of two thousand five hundred men, had taken post at Wattegaun), as from thence they might fall on our flanks and annoy us when advancing; and, for this purpose, two brigades of Madras Native infantry, composed of the twenty-second, twenty-eighth, thirty-eighth, and forty-third regiments, were placed under the command of Colonel M'Dowall, and directed to march on the night of the 15th.

Wattegaun is situated in a forest, about twenty miles from Prome, and is accessible by three different routes: one leading from Zeeoop, another from Shombulah, and the third in a direct line

between the two others. The twenty-second, under Major Lacy Evans, received instructions to march by the former road, so as to arrive before Wattegaun at daybreak; and the eighteenth Madras Native infantry marched out and occupied the ground at Zeeoop, as a support. Colonel M'Dowall, with the twenty-eighth and forty-third regiments, proceeded by the central route; and Lieutenant-colonel Smith, with the thirty-eighth Madras Native infantry, was ordered to leave his camp at Shombulah, and either unite with Colonel M'Dowall at Saagie, or fall on the enemy's flank, as circumstances might require.

At eight o'clock on the night of the 15th, we commenced this inauspicious march. The moon just afforded sufficient light to show the surrounding objects, but in a misty, indistinct manner; and enabled us to see that our road lay over a plain of paddy-fields, through which the men were obliged to crawl at a snail's pace, the country being still perfectly muddy. Now and then the elevated ridge by which the fields were divided offered a firmer footing, but on which only one man could walk abreast; and the Sepoys, consequently, marched in one continued file, and made but little progress. Colonel M'Dowall, with his column, arrived at Sembike, near Saagie, at midnight, where he awaited until two o'clock the arrival of Colonel Smith's corps; but, as that officer had been delayed by the bad roads, or more properly speaking, from having no road whatever, and could

not reach this spot before day-break, he continued to advance without him.

Major Evans arrived near Wattegaun, and had halted, but hearing some firing to his right, he concluded Colonel M'Dowall was engaged, and immediately advanced. At a turn of the road, he suddenly arrived before a low stockade or breastwork, about fifty yards distant, from whence a volley was fired, which did considerable execution on the leading company: the Major himself was wounded, and the firing still continuing, he did not deem it expedient to attempt storming the work, but ordered a retreat. No sooner was this commenced, than the Burmahs left their defences, and following up the rear very rapidly, pursued them, without intermission, for about four miles, killing and wounding a considerable number; but, fortunately, they desisted from the pursuit, at a moment when the Sepoys were so completely exhausted, that they could scarcely have protracted their resistance.

Colonel M'Dowall's column had now engaged the enemy; and repeated vollies of musketry were heard through the forest, with now and then the report of a piece of artillery. Shortly after Major Evans's retreat, the Colonel arrived opposite the temporary defences thrown up by the Shaans at Wattegaun, apparently about four hundred yards distant, having, for some time before, been skirmishing with the enemy's light troops, which had been judiciously thrown in the wood, and occasioned some loss to the column

when advancing. Proceeding a little in front of the brigade, to reconnoitre, he unfortunately received a shot in the head, which instantaneously terminated his existence; and Lieutenant-colonel Brooke, who succeeded to the command, deeming it useless to attack the enemy's position, as the works, at a distance, appeared to require scaling-ladders, also retired. He was instantly followed by the Shaans, who pressing on the rear and flanks with infantry and cavalry, occasioned a great deal of disorder, and a heavy loss. The doolie-bearers threw down their doolies and ran, leaving Colonel M'Dowall's body behind; and a young officer of the forty-third Madras Native infantry, who was dangerously wounded in the groin, was actually obliged to run for three miles. —As may be supposed, many wounded fell into the power of the enemy, and some few prisoners. Whilst these events were taking place on the left, Colonel Smith, with the thirty-eighth Native infantry, attracted by the sound of the firing, entered a bye-road in the wood, which appeared to lead directly towards the scene of action, and had advanced three miles, when the firing which had at first been heard much to his right and front, seemed to be moving quickly towards his left and rear; and a considerable-sized plain offering itself on his left at this moment, he marched into it, in the hopes of attracting the attention of the enemy, from what there was no doubt must be our defeated troops. A slight skirmish which took place between his advanced guard and a small

body of Burmahs had the desired effect; the distant firing ceased, and immediately afterwards about three hundred of the enemy's cavalry advanced into the plain, and several bodies of infantry showed themselves on the brink of the jungle: the former galloped up the plain, with much spirit, and, apparently, with the intention of charging; but a square being judiciously formed, they kept aloof. As this column was now completely committed in the centre of the Burman army, Colonel Smith, finding that he had gained his point in covering the retreat of the others, and fearing that his own return might be cut off by the numerous bodies of the enemy in his rear, commenced a retrograde movement, which was not molested until he re-crossed the Nowwein river, when some of our followers were attacked by the Burmahs, and taken prisoners.

On the morning of the 17th, we re-entered our lines dreadfully fatigued, having been two nights and a day marching without any rest; and on summing up the casualties, found that thirteen officers and more than two hundred men were killed and wounded: several of the missing were brought in next day by the peasantry, and about twenty Sepoys were taken prisoners, and sent up to Ava. The Burman force, in the vicinity of Wattegaun, had been considerably reinforced, and consisted of eight thousand Shaans, two thousand Burmahs, and six hundred cavalry; and of these, about five thousand occupied the rude works at Wattegaun.

Elated by this success, the Burman army advanced to within a few miles of Prome. The left wing under Maha Nemiou, took post at Sembike, and threw up stockades, from whence parties were daily sent close to our lines, to forage or seize any stragglers who might wander beyond the pickets. The Kee Woonghee, with the centre, moved down to Napadee, where, from the ramparts of Prome, we could plainly see the enemy erecting stockades, and fortifying the heights; and the Royals having been withdrawn from Yewndoung, the road to Padaong was left open for the passage of the Chuddah Woon, who, with seven thousand men, marched towards that town, whilst three thousand men proceeded to Shoedoung, in our rear, and thus completely surrounded us. The last detachment alone, however, caused us uneasiness, as we were, at this moment, daily expecting the arrival of thirty-five lacks of rupees, by water, from Rangoon, and it was feared they might be captured.

To prevent such a disaster, Lieutenant-colonel Godwin was despatched to Shoedoung Mew, with his brigade, the body-guard, and the horse-artillery; but on arriving there, found the marauders had retired, having had a skirmish with a small party of his Majesty's eighty-seventh regiment, which, as it luckily happened, was then advancing up the river. Remaining two or three days at Shoedoung to ensure the open communication of the left bank, Colonel Godwin had the satisfaction, on the 27th, of seeing the money arrive safe; and also Mr. Robertson, the

civil commissioner, with six companies of his Majesty's eighty-seventh regiment, which would prove a valuable reinforcement in the action which we anticipated as near at hand. It was Sir A. Campbell's plan, to draw the enemy from the recesses of the jungle; and as in this he had effectually succeeded, we were now in hopes that the Burmahs would have been induced, by our supposed fear of them, to attack our position, which was naturally strong, and had been further improved by clearing the jungle in front, and covering one or two of the most exposed points with abatis and breastworks. In order still better to encourage the belief of the Burmahs that we were anxious to retreat, Sir Archibald withdrew all the advanced corps; and this gave rise to a report, that the carts which were lading with provisions from our advance, were really preparing to return to Rangoon; and that some of the body-guard, who had been sent to that place, in order to bring up a remount of horses, were, in fact, only the forerunners of a general retreat. This intelligence was immediately transmitted to the Burman camp by the spies, and much elated the spirits of the enemy; but it made no alteration in the cautious system they had adopted of encircling us with stockades. The Burmahs appeared to attach great importance to the possession of Padaong Mew; and on the 20th, 25th, and 30th, they attacked the little stockade with a large force, but were repulsed on each occasion with heavy loss, by Captain Deane, of the Royals,

aided by Lieutenant Kellett, R. N., who having landed his guns, and manned them with sailors, was of much service. Here their hostile efforts ceased, and we prepared to resume the offensive.

Hitherto the General had not attempted any serious attack, as it would have been useless to do so without having it in his power to follow up his success; but as the commissariat stores were now in readiness to move, and that no other impediment interfered, the army received orders to march out of its cantonments at four o'clock in the morning of the 1st December, and to assemble at the Cone, where it was formed into two columns, the one under Sir A. Campbell himself, the other commanded by General Cotton, the united force amounting to two thousand five hundred King's troops, and one thousand five hundred Native infantry. As we marched out, the road was lined with the Burman inhabitants, looking with wondering eyes at the busy scene, and exclaiming "Koungthé Teclathé" (very good! beautiful!) whilst they wished us success, and a victory, although over their own countrymen; as they well knew that the Burmahs, if victorious, would make the weight of their vengeance fall on the heads of the helpless peasantry.

The column under Brigadier-general Cotton, moved up the left bank of the Nowwein river, directly on the village of Sembike; and Sir A. Campbell crossed the ford at Zeeop, and marched up the right bank so as to cut off the retreat of those who

might be put to flight by the second division, and also attack some works the enemy had thrown up at Lembeh, opposite to Sembike. At the same time, the commodore, Sir James Brisbane, with the flotilla, sailed up to Napadee, and cannonaded the heights, in order to attract the attention of the centre of the Burman army from the attack meditated on the left.

General Cotton arrived at Sembike rather before Sir A. Campbell reached Lembeh, and seeing that the works were not very formidable, he, with the light companies of his column under Colonel Godwin, immediately assaulted the stockade, whilst Major Chambers with his Majesty's forty-first regiment, made a most gallant and successful charge at another point. The Shaans received them with a cool and well-directed volley, by which four officers and sixty men were killed or wounded, and then stood to their works with a determination to stand the assault. The bayonet soon decided the affair, and the enemy fled, partly in the direction of Sir A. Campbell's force, who cannonaded their flying masses with much effect. Three hundred Burmahs and Shaans were killed in the stockade, and their venerable general, Maha Nemiou, was found amongst the number; he was one of the last to fly, and when he saw that retreat was his only resource, the outlets from the stockade were so completely choked up with fugitives, that he could not force his way through, and a stray shot soon after laid him low.

Two of the Shaan ladies, who (as was before mentioned) had accompanied the army, also perished. One of these, a lovely young girl about seventeen years of age, was found lying outside of the stockade, killed either by a grape shot, or musket ball. Being habited in a black jacket and large straw hat, similar to the men, her sex at first was not discovered, but when the soldiers ascertained that they had unwittingly been the cause of this pretty creature's premature death, they immediately dug a grave and deposited her corpse in it, with many sincere though unpolished expressions of regret that such should have been her melancholy fate. It is customary among the Shaans that the wives of the Chobwahs should have equal authority with their husbands, when taking the field to encounter an enemy; and in this instance it would seem that the confidence reposed in the beauteous Amazon was not misplaced.

This custom is very singular, and worthy of remark, as pointing out the higher degree of estimation in which the sex is held in this portion of the East. Some of the Shaans made a gallant resistance, sword in hand; and one who proved to be the surgeon-general, kept two men at bay for some time, but was at last overpowered and taken prisoner.

The Shaans fled towards Wattegaun; but our troops were so much fatigued from the long march in the heat of the sun, that we could not pursue them;

and our army consequently returned to Zeeop, where we bivouacked for the night, and deferred till the morrow attacking the Kee Woonghee at Napadee. On the morning of the 2nd we again moved off; and arriving within a couple of miles of Napadee, separated into two columns, General Cotton proceeding with his division in a circuitous direction, with the intention of forcing the enemy's left flank, whilst Sir A. Campbell made preparations to attack in front.

The position chosen by the enemy was remarkably strong; and from the peculiar nature of the country, which consisted of a succession of abrupt hills, thickly covered with a low, bushy bamboo, that it was almost impossible to penetrate, could only be attacked by a narrow road leading along the river's side, and enfiladed by a battery erected on the Theybue pagoda. This building stood on the summit of a steep, isolated hill, forming an abrupt precipice on the river's side, and further defended inland by a deep ravine. The height was stockaded and mounted with guns, and from it a succession of works had been erected for about half a mile towards Prome, which defended the river side, and then striking off at right angles extended some distance in the jungle, and prevented the position being turned. The river was here eight hundred yards wide, and hemmed in on the opposite side by a bold, precipitous range of hills, covered with foliage, and in one or two places occupied by the enemy, who, with infinite labour, had dragged

some guns up and planted them in battery; and on the left bank of the river were several stockades garrisoned by Chuddah Woon's force.

Previous to ordering the assault, Sir A. Campbell directed the artillery to play on the works, but unfortunately the impediments in the road prevented its being brought near enough to afford a material aid to the operations of the day. The flotilla under Sir James Brisbane also advanced in a line up the river, and gave to the *coup d'œil* a most brilliant effect. Firing as it proceeded, it soon attracted the attention of the enemy's batteries on the opposite shore; and a sharp cannonade ensued, which resounded through the hills like peals of thunder, and from the redoubled echo, gave the idea of a brisk engagement at some miles distance.

As soon as it appeared that the artillery had in some measure silenced the enemy's fire, Sir A. Campbell directed Brigadier Elrington with his brigade to advance on the right, and drive the enemy from the heights and stockades he occupied in that direction. The eighty-seventh regiment was ordered to proceed to the brigadier's left, and force those works which extended into the jungle; and Colonel Sale, with the thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments, was to follow the bank of the river, and storm the lower entrenchments and pagoda. The bugles sounded the advance, and the corps simultaneously moved forward. The thirty-eighth regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Frith, first entered the entrenchment on the hills,

and supported by the thirteenth, overcame every obstacle, pursuing the enemy from height to height, until the whole position, two miles in extent, was in our possession.

His Majesty's eighty-seventh regiment rushing through the jungle, carried everything opposed to it with the greatest spirit, and the forty-seventh in advancing was exposed to a heavy fire from behind trees and bushes, by which it met with some loss; but the enemy's line was now forced at all points: no further opposition was made; and the Burmahs slowly retired through the jungle, which was impervious to us, and consequently we were unable to harass them by an active pursuit. General Cotton failed in his attempt to penetrate the forest to the right, and for the present we remained contented with the advantages already gained, which fortunately had been purchased with the loss of only six officers* killed, six wounded, and one hundred and sixty men. Many pieces of artillery were captured in the works, and among the number one was discovered which had been cast during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Although the left and centre of the Burman army was thus dispersed, the Chuddah Woon, with his troops, still remained in the stockades on the right bank; and, on the 5th of December, Brigadier-

* Captain Dawson, R.N., Lieutenants Sutherland and Gossip, forty-first regiment, Lieutenant Proctor, thirty-eighth regiment, Lieutenant Baylee, eighty-seventh regiment, Ensign Campbell, royal regiment, killed.

general Cotton, with a portion of his division, crossed over and expelled them with but little opposition. The loss the Burman army suffered in these actions amounted to between two and three thousand men, and the different corps of which it was composed were now quite disorganized: in addition to which, the Shaans, with the exception of two thousand men, deserted in a body, and marched back to their own provinces: so that not more than two or three thousand men accompanied the chieftains to Meeayday, or Melloon; thus leaving the strong fortifications which had been erected at Pulloh and other parts of the road to Meeayday, quite defenceless, although they were admirably calculated, by their position and strength, to delay our progress, and allow sufficient time for the Burman army to rally.

For some days after the action, the army encamped at Zeeop, waiting for the baggage; and, during that time, the ponies taken from the Shaans on the 1st of December were sold by auction. The prices were most ridiculous, and afford a very good idea of the temporary value attached to these animals in consequence of the opening of the campaign. None sold under two or three hundred rupees, and some even cost eight hundred, and as much as nine hundred and fifty-six rupees*. Three months afterwards not a fourth part of the sum was offered!

* 95*l.* 12*s.*

CHAPTER XIV.

Civil Arrangements—The Army commences its March—Meeayday reconnoitred—We encamp there—Raj Gooroo liberated—Lameinzerai brings a Message from Melloon—We arrive at Patnagoh—Appearance of Melloon—Conferences on the Irrawaddy—Preliminaries of Peace signed—Races at Patnagoh—Letter from Dr. Sandford—The Burmahs demand a longer Truce—Hostilities recommence—Storm of Melloon, on the 19th of January—Treaty and other Papers found—Melloon destroyed.

Previous to the final departure of the army from Prome, arrangements were made to place the civil jurisdiction of Pegue under the control of British officers; and the towns of Rangoon, Pegue, Bassien, Prome, and Sarawah, were selected as their places of residence. The final emancipation of Pegue, by declaring it an independent nation under our protection, would, it was feared, be ultimately necessary, should the Burmahs still persist in their obstinate resistance; but, for the present, this step was not resorted to, as, in the event of peace, it would encumber us with an additional extent of territory, which we should be under the necessity of defending against the inroads of the Burmahs, and thus be continually involved in hostilities.

On the 8th of December, the baggage and stores of the army had arrived at Zeeop, and the first division received orders to move the next morning. Sir A. Campbell, with the first division, purposed

marching to Wattegaun and thence on Meeayday, where it was supposed the enemy was again concentrating. General Cotton, with the second division, was directed to advance to the latter town by the western road, and Brigadier Armstrong, with the Royal regiment, proceeded in the flotilla under the Commodore, and kept pace with the land-columns. Our total force amounted to four thousand five hundred men, and twenty-eight pieces of ordnance. Two regiments of Native infantry remained at Prome.

At daybreak on the morning of the 9th of December, the column under Sir A. Campbell struck its tents, and with light hearts and high spirits we bade our last farewell to Prome, and commenced the journey which it was hoped would put a stop to our labours, and unfold to our view the beauties and splendour of the golden palace of Ava.

In advancing to Wattegaun we followed the route pursued by Major Evans's column on the unfortunate 16th of November, and, as we passed, saw the skeletons and red jackets of the Sepoys who had fallen on that occasion, strewed along the road; but the Shaans did not appear to have remained here after their defeat, as we saw no traces of recent occupation. Our road for several days ran through a thick and gloomy forest, in which there was no sign whatever of inhabitants, and so little open ground, that we found great difficulty in obtaining sufficient space to encamp on. Many dead Shaans were laying on the verge of the wood, where they had been left to die,

either from their wounds or the exhaustion caused by famine and the cholera morbus, which had commenced devastating the Burman army. Shreds of cloth, old jackets, and hats, were also scattered about, and proved the flight of the enemy to have been very rapid and irregular.

We had hoped that the rains were entirely at an end; but the gloomy, lowering aspect of the sky seemed to portend an approaching storm. For three days the weather only threatened us—a respite which we hoped would enable us to get out of the narrow roads in which we were entangled; but, unfortunately, the evil moment was only averted to reach us at a time when we were completely embosomed in the wood. On the 11th, the morning was ushered in by a slight shower, which, not appearing of much consequence, the tents were struck, the advance sounded, and our column moved off; but scarcely had it done so when the storm burst. Rain poured in torrents; the ground, which was of a soft, loamy soil, yielded easily to the weight of the artillery, and became, in a few moments, a mass of mud; many of the baggage-carts broke down, and blocked up the passage; and the commissariat-waggons extended in a long file, without the power of either advancing or retrograding. To crown our evils, the appointed place of encampment was found to be scarcely large enough for half the troops, who were, consequently, crowded in the sandy bed of a nullah, just sufficiently wide to admit the tents. These, unfortunately, did

not join us till very late: darkness surprised us before the baggage entered camp; and when it did arrive, everything was found to be spoiled by the wet. The quantity of water which falls during a rainy day in India surpasses any thing that can be conceived in England, and it requires actual experience to estimate the degree of misery attendant on constant exposure to oriental showers.

A considerable portion of our provisions was injured by the damp; and three days passed before we recovered from the ill effects of the rain, when we emerged from the jungle, and struck off more to the left, for the purpose of reaching the Irrawaddy, the Shaans having quitted the main route and diverged towards the Galadzet mountains, over which was their route home. On the 17th, Sir A. Campbell encamped at Tahbo, seven miles from Meeayday, which it was supposed the Burmahs would evacuate. The flotilla joined us here, and General Cotton effected a junction with head-quarters the same evening, having unfortunately lost many men by the cholera morbus. From Tahbo, an officer of the Quarter master-general's department, with the Governor-general's body-guard, under Captain Dyke, were sent in advance to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and proceeded without opposition to Meeayday. At a distance the works had a formidable appearance; and the position is naturally strong. It is formed by the ruins of two square forts, on an elevated piece of ground, washed by the river on the

west face, and defended inland by a deep and muddy ravine which runs at the foot of the walls. It is full of pagodas, and was formerly a town of great importance, but the houses had all been destroyed to make way for the fortifications. Having discovered the works to be evacuated, we succeeded, with some difficulty in crossing the nullah, and entered the stockade, which was strewed in every direction with dead and dying. The sight was most disgusting, and showed to what an awful extent the Burmahs had been suffering from the cholera morbus. In one hut I saw a most revolting image of wretchedness—the living coupled with the dead! A miserable, emaciated being, who had not strength enough to move, and in whom the vital spark was fast extinguishing, was lying close to the dead body of a man in the last stage of putrefaction, and thus he must have been lingering for several days. The idea was really dreadful! Meeayday appeared to be a burial-ground instead of a fortress; fresh graves at every step offered themselves to the eye, and packs of famished dogs were prowling about amongst these emblems of mortality. The stench was intolerable; yet, in this domain of death, many helpless wretches had been left to die by their unfeeling comrades.

From them we ascertained that the rear-guard had left only an hour before; and, on looking from the summit of a pagoda, we could clearly discern seven war-boats near the shore, and about four hundred

men on the beach, five miles distant. Captain Dyke immediately pursued them, and charged, when we succeeded in capturing a war-boat, with three guns, and several prisoners; but the remaining six boats effected their escape to the middle of the stream, whence they opened a fire of musketry which did but little mischief.

The army marched to the northward of Meeayday on the following day, where we encamped in a large plain; and from hence the commissioners despatched the Raj Gooroo to the court, with our terms of peace, that he might personally explain the substance of them to the King, who, it was supposed, had been kept in ignorance of the greater part of the transactions which occurred at Neoungbenzeik.

The Raj Gooroo was a Brahmin of considerable talent and high rank, who, in 1823, had been sent by the King of Ava to Hindostan, nominally for the purpose of performing some religious ceremonies at Allahabad; and it was also supposed, with the view of prying into the affairs of the British, and forming alliances with the native powers; but whether this supposition was correct or not is still uncertain, nothing having subsequently transpired.

On the opening of the war he was seized, and sent round to Mr. Robertson, then commissioner in Arracan, and was by him brought to the army. He always professed himself much grieved that the war should continue; and, from his influence over the mind of the King, and his knowledge of our

superior power, it was supposed would induce the Golden Ear to listen to the terms of peace.

In consequence of some deficiency in the commissariat arrangements of the first division, it was obliged to halt at Meeayday for two or three days; but, on the 20th, Sir A. Campbell, with General Cotton's column, moved on to Khanlah, over a very hilly and bad road, which had only lately been traversed by the Burmahs, whose dead and sick were constantly to be seen on the road side; and not far from our camp, two hundred bodies were discovered in one spot, and evinced the great mortality that must have taken place in the ranks of the enemy. We now entered the hilly districts: the country between Meeayday and Prome was mostly level, and of a rich, luxuriant soil; but here the reverse was the case: the ground, arid and barren, afforded no nourishment to the trees, which were withered and stunted in their growth. The villages had all been deserted and burned; and, as in the first campaign, we were marching through a wilderness, the inhabitants in the first instance having been driven into the jungle by the enemy, and were now afraid to return until the British army should have advanced and covered their front.

On the 25th of December we encamped at Loonghee, formerly a considerable town, but now not having a single house. From the bank, a most beautiful view of the river can be seen, fully answering to the description given of it by Colonel Symes;

but in other respects it would be difficult to recognise the spot he mentions as a flourishing town.

Christmas-day was passed as gaily as could be expected in such a wilderness; and the next morning we struck inland to a miserable village, called Codoungweh, where Sir A. Campbell received a message from Sir James Brisbane, informing him that Lameinzerai had arrived on board the steam-boat, with a communication from Kollein Mengie, who had reached Melloon on his way from Ava, having been deputed by the King with full powers to conclude a treaty with the British commissioners. In order to ascertain what arrangements the Burmahs purposed making, Sir A. Campbell and Mr. Robertson directed Lieutenant-colonel Tidy and Lieutenant Smith to proceed to Melloon, from which we were not very distant. On this occasion the Colonel was not admitted within the walls of the fort, but had a small house prepared for his reception outside; where he was met by Attweynwoon Moungkyne, who demanded a truce for twenty-five days. This request Colonel Tidy had been directed positively to negative; and he further said, that only twenty-four hours would be allowed for the meeting of the commissioners; and that the instant he left the Burman lines hostilities would recommence. In the meantime the army continued advancing, and passed through a series of fortified posts, selected with great judgment and skill, which, had they been occupied, would have caused much annoyance; and,

on the 28th, halted at Meghioungyeh, five miles from Patnagoh, where we were joined by the flotilla. The latter town, on being reconnoitred, proved unoccupied; and, on the 29th, we marched thither, and took possession of the bank immediately opposite to Melloon. The river here is only a thousand yards wide; and, on the west side, is bounded by successive ranges of hills, falling in some places gradually, in others abruptly, down to the water's edge. On the slope of these were the ruins of the ancient fort of Melloon, which, formerly consisting of a rampart and ditch, now fallen to decay, were considerably elevated above, and overlooked the country on the land side; though from the river the whole interior of the work could be seen. Its shape was square, and had further been defended by a stockade and strong abatis. In the centre was a conical hill, surmounted by a pagoda, and fortified on the summit by a brick revetement, which rendered it a very strong post—quite the Acropolis of Melloon. Numerous gay pagodas reared their spiral tops within the walls; and, at a short distance from the ramparts, a neat gilt pagoda had lately been erected by the directions of the King, over the ashes of the much-valued Maha Bundoolah, whose last remains had been brought thus far.

About a mile to the south of Melloon, the river becomes more contracted; and there, on the brink of a precipice, the enemy had erected a strong work, and mounted several guns, which completely com-

manded the passage of the river, and rendered the attempt to pass up rather hazardous. At the moment of our appearance at Patnagoh, Melloon presented a very lively scene. Troops well armed were marching and countermarching; chieftains, distinguished by their golden chattahs, kept moving to and fro, apparently giving directions; gongs and bands of music were sounding with a most vehement uproar; and under the walls lay several hundred boats—some adapted for war, others for accommodation, but by far the greater part belonging to merchants and traders, who, as soon as they saw us, made a simultaneous attempt to pull up the stream; but were arrested in their flight by a few rounds from our artillery fired over their heads. In the meantime Sir James Brisbane, in the *Diana*, advanced up the river; but the Burmahs, instead of firing at him, sent a couple of gilt war-boats to meet the steam-boat, and escort her past the batteries; and the Commodore, unmolested, sailed by the town, and anchored in a line beyond the Burman boats, so as to prevent any of them escaping. Young Prince Memiaboo, who commanded in Melloon, had at one moment left the fort; but he subsequently returned: and Lameinwoon, who had likewise fled, having been seized by his order, was sentenced to be embowelled; but the other chieftains having interceded, his punishment was remitted. Scarcely had we made preparations for encamping, when the Raj Gooroo came over from Melloon, apparently

much alarmed, and stated the earnest desire of the Burman chieftains to negociate. Arrangements were instantly made to further the desired intercourse; and it was agreed that the commissioners from the two powers should meet on the ensuing day in a large accommodation-boat, which the Burmahs promised to anchor midway on the river.

At two o'clock the respective parties started from the opposite banks; the Burmahs in a large war-boat, and our commissioners in the men-of-war gigs. This meeting was quite divested of the pomp and finery of the conference at Neoungbenzeik, and only four Burmahs of rank now appeared, the Kollein Mengie, Kee Woonghee, Attweynwoon Moungkyne, and Maha Silwa. The first was a decrepit old man, about sixty years of age, with small piercing eyes, a wrinkled face, and a countenance fully expressive of the cunning and duplicity which marked his character. He was richly habited in velvet and gold, as also the Kee Woonghee, who now appeared only the secondary personage. Moungkyne we were already acquainted with, and Maha Silwa's name was well known. The latter, fat, bloated, and ugly, seemed a perfect buffoon; but he may, probably, have assumed this character, in order more effectually to mask his own disposition, in which we subsequently found that the knave often predominated over the fool.

Sir A. Campbell, Mr. Robertson, and Sir James Brisbane, were the leading characters on our side,

and were accompanied by several officers of the army and navy.

The first meeting was employed in discussing the articles relating to territorial cession, which were the same as at Neoungbenzeik; and to which, after offering many paltry objections, the Kollein Mengie assented. The assembly then broke up, and was adjourned till the same hour on the following day, when, on opening the conversation, the Kollein Mengie again reverted to the cession of territory, but was informed that we considered that point concluded, and would pass to articles relating to the pecuniary indemnification of our war-expenses. When the wily Burmah heard that we demanded two crores of rupees, he professed the greatest astonishment; said it was impossible they could ever pay such a sum; and dared not mention the demand to the King. "How," said he, "can you possibly make out that the expenses of the war cost you so much more than us? We bring an immense number of soldiers into the field, and each man receives one hundred and fifty ticals; whereas, you have very few men, and, consequently, cannot be at the same expense." This speech was easily answered; and it being mentioned as an instance of our expenditure, that the hire of a single ship amounted to between eight and ten thousand rupees monthly he seemed quite incredulous, and replied that he had traded himself, but never in his life heard of such an enormous sum. His commercial transactions, it must be observed, never exceeded

the purchase or sale of the cargoes of the small boats in the Irrawaddy. He continued very obstinate about the money, until, at last, he was forcibly reminded by Mr. Robertson, that his court had brought army after army to attack us, which had been successively annihilated by Sir A. Campbell; and that instead of demanding much from them, we were giving more than they had a right to expect; for that we restored the fine kingdom of Pegue, and refrained from conquering Ava, when he must be perfectly sensible it was in our power to seize the capital, as they had not the least chance of effectually resisting us.

The commissioners, however, agreed to remit one crore, on condition that six lacks should be paid down on the ratification of the treaty, when the army would retire on Prome; nineteen more within thirty days, and twenty-five lacks before one hundred days elapsed, in which case th embarkation of the troops for Hindostan should commence.

During this discussion, one of the Burman attendants, who was smoking his cigar on the outrigger of the boat, allowed a spark of fire to fall on some loose grains of gunpowder, which instantly exploded, and caused some stir amongst the Burman plenipotentiaries, who instantly ordered the culprit to be seized and conveyed to the adjoining war-boat, where he was punished with *tounging*, though, had Maha Silwa's advice been followed, he would have lost his head: fortunately for him, Sir A. Campbell inter-

ceded, and the punishment was remitted, after a few blows. Previous to our separating, the Kee Woon-ghee and Kollein Mengie expressed a wish to examine our cocked hats; and one being handed to them, they very gravely enquired whether the flowing plume was not charmed. To this dress they attached much importance; and any officer who wore them was called Kyet Taon Bo, or chief with the cock's feather. Sir A. Campbell, though properly termed the Bokeoh, was often addressed by this title. During the conference, our new acquaintance, Maha Silwa, made himself extremely facetious; and while some grave points were discussing by the higher personages, informed us that he had formerly been Governor-general of Assam, where he saw a great deal of the English. In an under tone, he pronounced brandy and wine to be very good, and with the greatest *sang froid* enumerated all the actions he ran away from during the war,—feats on which he seemed highly to prize himself, and related as very good jokes. We asked him to come and pay a visit to our camp, and Kollein Mengie having given his sanction, he returned with us to the shore. On this occasion, he behaved pretty well, that is to say, he ate his dinner without getting drunk, and returned early to Melloon, having received a general invitation, of which he promised to avail himself.

On the 3d of January, the final meeting took place, when the treaty was duly signed and sealed on both sides, the Burman chieftains pledging themselves

that the ratified treaty, the prisoners, and money, should be delivered to us on the 18th, until when Sir A. Campbell granted them a truce, as it required several days to communicate with the court*.

The following morning an Attweynwoon, in a gilt war-boat, was despatched to Ava, nominally bearing the treaty, and Captain Snodgrass (military secretary) proceeded to Calcutta, to obtain the signature of the Governor-general.

When it was generally known that peace had been signed, an unrestrained intercourse took place between our camp and Melloon. A large bazar was soon formed on our side of the river, to which the Burman soldiers constantly came from the opposite shore, and after making their purchases quietly departed; and our servants daily went over to the town to procure vegetables, fowls, and other provisions.

It was very gratifying to see this change in the system with which the Burmahs had hitherto carried on the war, as it seemed to imply a full confidence on their part that the treaty would be ratified; but our private information led us to think otherwise, and the General, who had formed a perfectly correct estimate of Burman faith, was not so sanguine with regard to peace as might be supposed. We daily could perceive the Burmahs at work in Melloon, re-

* When the Burman chieftains agreed to sign the treaty, they had the effrontery to request that we would give them back the cannon and muskets which we had captured during the war, but were informed that we had thrown them into the river, as being of no value.

pairing the fortifications; bodies of infantry and cavalry were constantly arriving from the Ava road; a large cloud of smoke, indicating the bivouac of a considerable force, rose above the forest, a little distance inland; and as we knew that the original garrison of Melloon amounted to only four thousand five hundred men, it was very evident the enemy had been much reinforced. A circumstance also occurred at this time, which afforded good proof of the insincerity of Burman protestations.

The first division of the army had halted at Meghioungyeh, five miles below Patnagoh; and as no danger was apprehended, our officers were in the habit of riding unarmed to and from the camps. It happened, on one of those occasions, that Lieutenant Flood, a fine young officer of his Majesty's thirteenth light infantry, left Patnagoh rather late in the evening, with the intention of returning to his regiment at Meghioungyeh; but darkness overtaking him before he had proceeded far, he unfortunately, at a point where two roads met, took the wrong one, and after wandering about all night, in the morning met with a Burman, from whom he enquired his way to the camp. The man apparently acquiesced, and led him for some distance, until he came to a place where four other Burmahs were standing, who immediately rushed out, seized and pinioned Flood, and then placing him in a cart, drove off to Toundwain, a village about fifty miles inland. There he was rather roughly treated; part of his clothes were taken from

him, and he was obliged to show himself as a curiosity to the villagers; but being subsequently forwarded to Mugway, forty miles up the river, the musghi behaved with much politeness, and took him to his own house, where he prepared food for him, and killed a pig in honour of the stranger. He was permitted to rove about the village under surveillance, and used to pass his time by chatting with the Poonghis, and trying to make them understand him. In the meanwhile the greatest anxiety was felt in our camp respecting his fate, and a detachment of the body-guard proceeded in search of him, but was unsuccessful. The Kee Woonghee, on being applied to, professed perfect ignorance of his fate, and said that he must have fallen into the hands of the Demiahs, or robbers, over whom he had no control, and who would even put him to death, should he fall into their hands. His veracity, however, appeared rather suspicious a few days afterwards; for an old woman who had just passed through Mugway, came into camp, and stated that she had seen a British officer there, and her deposition being committed to paper, was sent to the Kee-Woonghee, who then promised he should be immediately restored. On Lieutenant Flood's departure from Mugway, the musghi lent him a poney to ride, but no sooner was he out of sight of the village, than his guards made him dismount, and rode the animal themselves; and to add to these indignities, when brought to Melloon he was placed in the stocks; but at last, on the

morning of the 10th, we had the pleasure of congratulating him on his safe return. His Arab horse was subsequently sent over, but terribly ill-used, having been constantly raced by the Burmahs against their ponies, on which occasion, as the poor animal was badly fed and lamed, he must have been beaten, and the experiment in all probability gave rise to the entertaining race which occurred shortly afterwards at Patnagoh.

Maha Silwa, after the first interview, had been a daily visiter at our camp, where he met with much attention, and whence he generally departed either tipsy or laden with wine and brandy, which he had not the least hesitation in asking for; but it was difficult to judge whether these visits were merely for the purpose of gratifying his own gluttony, or whether under the mask of buffoonery, he did not cloak the design of prying into our plans, and ascertaining if we were at all doubtful of the sincerity of his countrymen. On these occasions he was always accompanied by Lameinzerai, whose constant calls with messages had made him quite at home in the army.

One morning that Maha Silwa was paying a visit to Major Jackson, he professed himself most anxious to possess an English, or rather an Arab horse, and told the Major that he would bring over six Burman ponies, and run them against an equal number of Arabs, the winner to become possessed of the losing horse. This was agreed to; and on the 13th January Maha Silwa made his appearance on our side of the

river, bringing with him the stipulated number of ponies, and accompanied by a large suite, amongst whom were many Cassayers, who, being reputed good horsemen, were selected as jockies on this momentous occasion. The ponies were pretty little animals, but not exactly capable of coping with our chargers; and their housing, and the large leather flaps pendant on each side of the saddle, were not well adapted to racing; but the Burmahs thought differently, and we were informed that it was reported in the Burman camp, that whichever party prevailed in the race would be conqueror in the next action.

In the evening, the rival parties proceeded to an open space in front of the camp, where the inequalities of the ground had been levelled, and a course, four hundred yards in length, marked off. As may be supposed, the whole army became spectators of this extraordinary scene, and formed a line on each side of the course. Maha Silwa professed his wish to run against a handsome Arab horse belonging to Major Jackson, and the first race was therefore between it and one of the chieftain's best ponies, which, after being beat in three successive heats, was adjudged by Maha Silwa to Major Jackson, as fairly won. A second race took place, and Maha Silwa being again unfortunate, declared he would run no more, and that he had no chance of entering into competition with us. The Cassay riders appeared very much annoyed at losing their little horses; and one of them, before the meeting broke up, amused us

with a singular exhibition;—taking the bridle and saddle off a spirited little poney, he vaulted on his back and rode at full speed down the course, guiding him by tapping the head right or left, and stopping him by leaning forward and throwing his clasped hands over the animal's nose.

The ensuing morning, Major Jackson sent Maha Silwa his poney, but it was returned with a message, that "the poney had been fairly run for and won, and that, consequently, the Maha Silwa could not think of taking it back again;" a sense of fair dealing we should not have given him credit for. At this time, a letter was received from Dr. Sandford and Lieutenant Bennett, of the Royal regiment, who had been taken prisoners, when proceeding from Prome to Rangoon, in November, and sent up to Ava. This epistle was a most curious production, being, though written by them, evidently dictated by some other person. It commenced by stating that they were prisoners at large in Ava, and very well treated; that the King was most anxious to make peace on a liberal footing, but that it was contrary to his religious principles and the constitution of the empire to make any cession of territory, as he was bound to preserve its integrity; that, in like manner, he could not think of paying any money, but would rather try every expedient than have recourse to such a measure. The tenour of this communication was too absurd to be regarded with any attention; but it caused great satisfaction, inasmuch that it ac-

counted for the absence of those two officers, who, it was feared, had been murdered.

The 18th was now not far distant, and yet we saw nothing indicative of peace, although many trifling circumstances occurred to induce a contrary supposition. The defences of Melloon were observed to be enlarging; and, one day, Sir A. Campbell having remarked that a new stockade was erecting, sent to acquaint the Kee Woonghee, that as a truce existed between us, it was not right that offensive preparations should be carried on by him. The Kee Woonghee, in reply, assured the General he was not throwing up any fortifications, but that a small party of men had just joined his camp from the opposite shore, and were entrenching themselves according to the Burman custom; and that, as it gave umbrage, he would order them to desist. He did so; in the daytime all was quiet; but every morning we could plainly perceive the progress they had made during the night.

The day previous to the expiration of the truce, we began to feel great anxiety respecting the ultimatum of the Golden Foot; and, notwithstanding the assertions of the Burmahs to the contrary, had but little doubt of the renewal of hostilities. Civilities, however, still passed between the two generals; and the Kee Woonghee, hearing that Sir A. Campbell had felt indisposed for some time past, sent over his own physician to attend him; a courteous act of which, fortunately, the General had no occasion to

avail himself: it was, nevertheless, an extraordinary stretch of politeness among people whom we are in the habit of styling barbarians. In the evening two attweynwoons paid Sir A. Campbell a visit; and although they could give no answer as to the cause of the non-arrival of the prisoners, demanded a further delay of five or six days, and promised to pay down four lacks on the morrow. This was not acceded to, and the final discussion was postponed till the hour appointed for the meeting of the commissioners next day.

The 18th came, and with it a renewal of war. At two o'clock, the commissioners and other officers who were to be present at the meeting, had assembled on the river's bank in full dress, previous to pushing off to the conference-boat; when a message came from the Kollein Mengie and Kee Woonghee stating that they were unwell, and could not attend. The motive of this feigned indisposition was obvious, and Sir A. Campbell and Mr. Robertson, no longer placing any faith in their affirmations that the treaty would arrive, sent Major Jackson, Mr. Mangles, and two other officers, to Melloon, with a note requiring, as a proof of the sincerity of the Kollein Mengie and Kee Woonghee, that they should evacuate Melloon before sunrise on the 20th, and giving them until twelve o'clock that night to determine; when, if they did not agree to the proposition, war would recommence. The deputation was perfectly well received, and conducted to the Kollein Mengie's house, within the fortress, where the two dignitaries were

prepared to meet it. They owned themselves so much ashamed of the apparent insincerity of their conduct, that they had feigned sickness in order to avoid seeing the British General; but with respect to the note, would give no immediate answer, and it was therefore left with them.

On the return of the deputation all doubts ceased, and war became the order of the day. Our old friend Maha Silwa, notwithstanding, remained in the British camp till the last moment, and assured us he would run away the first shot that was fired; a promise which we had not the slightest doubt of his keeping most faithfully. In the event of our attacking Melloon, the chief of the Cassayers had promised to join us; and as he knew that his native country, Munnipoor, was now in our possession, it seemed very probable that he would be true to his word; but our private intelligence also enabled us to ascertain that, whilst we delayed at Patnagoh, the Burman army had been reinforced by sixteen thousand men, and that more were daily expected—so that the garrison now amounted to twenty thousand men. Midnight having passed without any communication being received from Melloon, the heavy artillery was landed, and the construction of batteries commenced; whilst at the same time we could distinctly hear repeated blows on the enemy's side, which announced to us that they were engaged in throwing up some new stockade. Our batteries for twenty-eight pieces of cannon, under the directions of Lieutenant-colonels Hopkinson and

Pollock, were ready at daybreak; but as some of the heavy guns were at that time lying on the beach, a detachment was ordered down to assist in dragging them up; and when thus employed, the fog cleared up, and disclosed what we were about to the enemy, but to our astonishment not a single shot was fired from the stockades, although they might have occasioned us considerable loss. The Burmahs, however, had not been idle during the night; an extensive stockade appeared on the very spot where we had heard them working; and it seems they had previously prepared the wood, ditch and abatis, so that to erect it, only required placing the timber upright. We observed upon a hill to the southward a large entrenchment, manned by Shaans; but within the stockade of Melloon scarcely a man was to be seen—all was quiet and hushed, so that it almost appeared the town was deserted. The men were all under cover, in their rude bomb-proofs, or manning the ramparts; and this silence, therefore, only more strongly demonstrated a determination to await the assault.

At eleven o'clock our batteries were all ready, and opened with one general volley of shot, shells, and rockets, into the stockade. This discharge made all those Burmahs not under cover, immediately seek refuge in their hiding-places; and even these were not of much avail, two sides of the work being enfiladed by our guns, yet still not a single shot was returned by the enemy.

While the cannonade was taking effect, troops were embarking in the flotilla, a little above Patnagoh, in order to benefit by the current: they were distributed into four columns. The first brigade, consisting of his Majesty's thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments*, (now only four hundred and eighty strong,) under Lieutenant-colonel Sale, was ordered to attack the south-east angle of Melloon, while Brigadier-general Cotton, with three brigades commanded by Lieutenant-colonels Godwin, Blair and Parlby, should cross above the town, and after carrying the outworks, hem the Burmahs in. At one o'clock the troops moved off under cover of our artillery, which kept a brisk fire upon the enemy's works; and being favoured by a strong wind and tide, the thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments passed rapidly down in front of the Burman entrenchments, exposed to a very heavy fire of grape and musketry, which was only at this time opened upon us. This sight was indeed most splendid. On the river were our gun-boats full of soldiers, and engaged in returning the fire of the fort—our land batteries were in full play, and the enemy's fortifications displayed one entire line of fire and smoke, forming, to a mere spectator, a very interesting scene.

Arriving at the south-east angle, where the bank was fortunately rather high, and protected the boats from grape, though they were much exposed to

* These two regiments left Calcutta with eighteen hundred men.

musketry, the little man-of-war's boat, with Colonel Sale and some other officers on board, pulled in shore with two gun-boats, the others being rather behind, and at that moment received a volley of musketry which disabled half the crew, and Colonel Sale and Lieutenant Dickson of the engineers, who were both wounded: the men of the adjoining boats, however, immediately sprung on shore, and being too few in number to assault the work without ladders, dashed half way up the bank, to where a little cover was afforded by a ridge of sand within ten yards of the walls, and there laying down, kept up a sharp fire until the arrival of more men enabled them to advance. An opening was soon made in the abatis, and a few men got under the walls, whence the Burmahs tried to drive them by thrusting out spears, and throwing down shot. Major Frith, who had succeeded to the command, was dangerously wounded by one of the former; but the ladders being placed, the wall was instantly gained, and the Burmahs commenced their retreat in two dense columns, without defending the lofty Pagoda, which it was supposed would have been their chief point of resistance. They were instantly pursued through the fort by our gallant little force, which seemed a mere handful, compared to the masses of the enemy which were retiring before it: but the men were so much fatigued that they could not proceed beyond the west face of the stockade, whence they kept up a heavy fire on the fugitives. The first brigade was in possession of

Melloon before the whole of General Cotton's column had crossed the river: that officer, however, with his troops made a judicious movement to the rear, for the purpose of intercepting the fugitives, but unfortunately too late for the purpose. In this affair the enemy exhausted his last resources, and not only was their loss very heavy, but as a consequence of the subsequent panic, the principal part of their army disbanded. The Burman chiefs had supposed it impossible that Melloon could ever be taken. Maha Silwa thought otherwise, and early in the morning volunteered to see what the Shaans were about in their cantonment, whence he took good care not to return near Melloon.—Young Prince Memiaboo was one of the last who fled, and this was the first and solitary instance of any member of the Burman royal family remaining within reach of our shot. He left all his state dresses and other baggage behind, as also about thirty thousand rupees, besides a considerable sum which the soldiers on entering his house had divided amongst themselves. Melloon was full of military stores of great value, and on the walls were mounted seventy-nine pieces of cannon: twenty tons of gunpowder, one thousand seven hundred muskets, and a large store of grain, also fell into our hands; but by far the greatest acquisition, were numerous papers found in the houses of the principal chieftains, and which threw a great light on their former proceedings.

The first on the list of these was the identical treaty

which had been signed by the commissioners on the third, and which we supposed had been sent to Ava! This flagrant proof of the treachery and duplicity of the Burmahs in their late political transactions, was most annoying, as it clearly proved that, instead of bringing the war to a conclusion by granting an armistice, we only gave the enemy time to reinforce his army; and, in fact, we soon after ascertained that five thousand men were within one day's march of Melloon on the 19th, and that it was for the purpose of enabling them to effect their junction that the prolongation of the truce had been demanded.

This paper was sent up to the Kollein Mengie and Kee Woonghee, by the commissioners, with a note, stating that they had the pleasure of forwarding a document which the Burman chieftains, in the hurry of their departure from Melloon, had left behind them.—It is to be hoped they felt the rebuke. Two other papers of a very interesting nature also appeared, and discovered to us that the Raj Gooroo, instead of being desirous to see the war finished, had, on the contrary, been urging the Burman government to continue it. The first of these was written from him to the General commanding the Burman army; and, after stating that he had been released by the English, begged that orders might be sent to the advanced posts, authorising him to pass. The second offered advice in a military point of view, and gave admirable information respecting our movements. It said, that in the action of the 1st Decem-

ber, we lost sixty men, and on the 2nd, one thousand, and that we much dreaded the royal army. That our force, which appeared so numerous, consisted of merely 5000 men, of whom only half were Europeans, and the remainder camp-followers and attendants. Our marching in two divisions was said to be merely for the purpose of making our army appear larger than it really was; and we were said to discover the road by the aid of the Prome residents, and by daily sending out an officer and twenty or thirty horse to look for it. We were represented as particularly apprehensive of a night attack; and the Burmahs were therefore advised to make a feint on both our flanks, whilst, with another column, they should attack the centre, and rush on immediately, as the English were very much afraid of coming into close action with a Burman soldier. The writer proceeded to say, that when the English fight a battle, they fire their great guns at one place, and make a noise for the purpose of encouraging themselves; and then, when they think the attention of the enemy is attracted, they send troops round to another part, and commence the attack: he therefore recommended the Burmahs to reserve their fire always until the English were quite close.

Thus, instead of furthering our pacific intentions, it now appeared that the Raj Gooroo had only availed himself of his liberty, in order to throw greater difficulties in our way, and elevate the hopes of the court of Ava. The designing priest probably viewed

with much alarm the chance of our obtaining a footing in the country; and, perhaps, might have acted this part in opposition to his good sense, which must have pointed out to him, during his residence in our eastern dominions, that no native power could ever effectually oppose the British arms.

Not the least curious paper in this budget was a letter from a lady at Ava, to her husband with the army at Melloon, in which she requested that he would send her a few of the white English slaves! What a wound to our pride and vanity, that this female demi-savage should presume to talk of our polished selves, as if we were a herd of cattle!

Eighteen gilt war-boats, and three hundred others of various kinds, were captured on the 19th; and on the following morning, the pioneers were directed to throw the ammunition into the river, and destroy the works, when a considerable number of wounded men, who had concealed themselves, were discovered. Amongst the number, was a handsome Shaan chief, who was so badly wounded in the heel that our medical men wished to amputate his leg; but this he would not submit to, as he said it was not proper that a chief of his rank should have only one leg, and he preferred taking his chance. Two fine lads were also brought in severely wounded, one in the arm, and the other in the leg: they were sons of the Burman Commissary-general, and were flying with him when they were shot; but the father pre-

ferred remaining, and being made prisoner with his children, to effecting his escape. Amputation became necessary in both cases, an operation which they most cheerfully underwent, and proper care being taken of them, they soon perfectly recovered. The father, who was very grateful for the kindness shown to his children, was shortly afterwards set at liberty; indeed, we never detained our prisoners beyond one or two days.

The guns and magazine having been removed from Melloon, the works were set on fire, and formed a grand illumination. Every now and then the small powder-magazines exploded with a loud report, sending columns of smoke into the air; and, at last, the conflagration having reached one of the kioums, it blazed forth a lofty pyramid of fire, emitting the most brilliant sparks, and projecting large ignited pieces of wood to a considerable distance.

The next morning Melloon was a heap of ashes; and this, the strongest hold of Ava, whence the invaders were to have been ignominiously driven back, presented merely a desert spot, distinguished from the adjoining country solely by the clusters of blackened pagodas, and by the embers of the stockade; whilst, at this same moment, the host of men—full of confidence, and certain of victory—which had garrisoned it, were dispersed and wandering about the country, uncertain where to direct their steps, or whither to fly for protection. Memboo, which had

been the first town where the fugitive chieftains halted, was soon left in their rear; and Pakangyeh and Sembeghewn would, it was supposed, be the next points of resistance, should they again venture to oppose us.

CHAPTER XV.

We march from Patnagoh—Petrified Wood—Skirmish at Yaynangheoum on the 30th of January—Arrival of Dr. Price and the British Prisoners—Oil Wells—Pakangyeh—State of the Burman Court—The "King of Hell" appointed Commander-in-chief—Communication with the Emperor of China—Action in front of Pagahm Mew—9th February—The Town carried by Storm—The Shoezeegoon Pagoda—Curious Paintings—Dr. Price returns—Conduct of the Naiwoon Barein—His Execution—Camp formed near Ava.

On the 25th of January the first division of the army recommenced its march to the northward, and, as the weather was very cool and pleasant, did not leave Patnagoh before eight o'clock, thereby avoiding the heavy fogs which at this time of the year rise about daybreak, and are seldom dispelled until the rays of the sun become very powerful. The road, as usual, ran through a hilly country well wooded with a species of mimosa, small teak-trees, and other shrubs, which, from their stunted growth, clearly demonstrated the impoverished nature of the soil, compared with the rich, loamy plains of Pegue: indeed, throughout the whole of the hilly tract, vegetation is not so abundant as in the lower provinces; a change, however, which proved favourable to our movements, as the jungle was now sufficiently open to enable us to see the surrounding country. The soil was a mixture of sand and clay; but in the plains we found it of a much richer quality.

After marching six miles from Patnagoh, we reached the summit of a steep hill, which commanded a magnificent view of the surrounding country. A large plain lay beneath us covered with wood, and ornamented with numerous pagodas, some of great antiquity, bespeaking the grandeur or opulence of what had been, in days of yore, a considerable town, whilst two or three of later date, and neatly whitewashed, indicated that religion had not been neglected by the inhabitants of the little hamlets of Taimboop and Meingoon. In the valley on our left rolled the Irrawaddy, whose course might be traced for many miles; and on its opposite bank ran two or three ridges of hills, here and there crowned with pagodas, and gradually merging into the distant Arracan mountains, which were but faintly visible in the horizon. Meingoon, where we encamped, bore the traces of having been, in former days, a place of considerable importance; but now a few ruined and deserted huts, and a beautiful new kioum, were the only signs of habitation. The remains of a square fort and ditch could easily be traced, and we observed many pagodas of grotesque shapes, differing from any we had hitherto seen in the environs of the village. These buildings were mostly of a pyramidical shape, covering a vaulted chamber containing an image of Buddha; and, on the outside, several niches were cut out, destined for the same purpose, not unlike the little shrines of the virgin and saints which are to be seen in Spain and Italy.

The officers of the army were now allowed to amuse themselves with shooting; and, as game abounds in these districts, it was very seldom that they had a bad day's sport. Partridges, quails, snipes, jungle-fowl, and hares, were commonly met with; deer, also, of a fine description, occasionally crossed our line of march, but this was not a common occurrence.

Yehangiounwah, where we encamped on the 26th, after marching for eight miles through a pretty country, was in the middle of a plain about a mile wide, and of great length, intersected by a fine stream of water—at this season dwindled into a mere rivulet, but bearing the appearance of being, during the rains, a river of considerable size. A fine species of grass covered the plain, which, in many places, had been laid out in paddy-fields belonging to the adjoining villages, none of which were inhabited, and some, indeed, only nominally existed.

During the last two days, I was struck with the difference which apparently subsists between the present and the past state of the population of Ava. Large plots of ground, from the circumstance of their being clear of trees, and merely overgrown with brambles, were, no doubt, many years since in a highly cultivated state, and must have pertained to villages which, instead of being eight or ten miles asunder, may then have been thickly strewed over the country. Everything, indeed, combined to convey

an idea that we were now only viewing the deserted remains of what had been, at a remoter period, a fine and flourishing country, reduced to its present deserted and impoverished state by the tyranny and mismanagement of the government. Scarcely a day passed that we did not see some fresh instances of cruelty exercised upon the wretched peasantry; and, two days before we left Patnagoh, the light boats of the navy having sailed up the river for the purpose of releasing some canoes which were said to be detained by the enemy, they discovered, affixed to crucifixes, the bodies of fifteen men and women, who had been shot by the orders of Montoungbo, a chieftain of ferocious character, who, with a corps of five or six hundred men, watched our front a few miles in advance of us. This wretch had also caused many women to be thrown into the river!

The day after the capture of Melloon, Brigadier Shawe proceeded with the forty-seventh and eighty-seventh regiments to Toundwain, a considerable town about fifty miles inland, where it was supposed we might procure some cattle for the army; and we now heard that he had arrived there on the 24th, and found the country to be fertile, well wooded and watered, and apparently populous. He had a slight skirmish with a small party of the enemy, and fortunately succeeded in procuring several head of oxen.

On the 27th we encamped at Mugway, and found that the forty-third regiment of Madras Native infantry, which had arrived there the preceding day,

had been harassed during the night by the force under Montoungbo, who still continued falling back as we advanced.

For several days past we had an opportunity of observing the very curious property possessed by the soil, in these districts, of petrifying wood. Whether this transformation is effected by water or not I am unable to determine, but the most beautiful specimens are found in the driest parts of the country; and the petrifactions are so very common, that every stone we examined was of that description. Large trunks of trees, branches, and even leaves, may be seen preserving their different forms and distinctly showing the most delicate fibres. Many specimens, also, are to be met with which have not undergone a complete transmutation, but retain part of their properties as wood whilst gradually hardening into stone. In several instances the wooden pillars which supported the kioums and other buildings were found to be completely petrified at the base of the column, whilst a little higher up the change was only commencing, and at the summit the wood preserved its ordinary qualities.

During our march on the 28th we passed Memboo on the opposite bank of the river, which appeared to be a large town, and was surrounded by a diversity of pagodas. Here it was that Prince Memiaboo, the Kee Woonghee, and Kollein Mengie, first halted, after their flight from Melloon; they then proceeded to Chalain Mew, where Menzaghie, the queen's

brother, still retained a considerable force, and sent Kollein Mengie to the capital, for the purpose of explaining matters to the Golden Ear.

Several deserted villages lay on our route, and we observed, for the first time, fields of Indian corn and gram, also paddy, tobacco, and various kinds of grain. The Irrawaddy here had increased in breadth, and was consequently very shallow, and divided by immense sand banks, which during the rainy season are all under water, when the width from bank to bank is nearly five miles,—an expanse almost equal to the Ganges. The face of the country now began to bear a dry sandy appearance; and the Arracan mountains, which hitherto had bounded the western horizon, were no longer within our sight.

The next morning, on entering Wetmachoote, we heard that Montoungbo, with his detachment, had only retired from thence during the night. This town, though small, was one of the prettiest we had fallen in with since our departure from Prome: kioums of the most finished kind, pagodas, and all the peculiar ornaments and comforts which appertain to the residence of the priesthood, were to be seen in great numbers: the remains of a small cantonment surrounded one of the pagodas, and the houses of the town had not been destroyed. The sterile appearance of the adjacent country, almost totally destitute of vegetation, enhanced the beauty of the sacred grove which shaded the monasteries, and overlooked the steep banks of the river. And within its precincts,

under the shelter of a small temple, was a large slab engraven with the impression of Gaudma's foot, similar to that already mentioned in the Shoe-Shando at Prome. It was necessary that we should halt here on the 30th; but as Montoungbo was stated to have occupied Yaynangheoum, twelve miles in advance, an officer of the Quartermaster-general's department was ordered to proceed in that direction to reconnoitre the enemy's position, taking with him the Governor-general's body-guard, now reduced to only thirty-four troopers. On arriving within two miles of the village, a small picket of Burman cavalry was observed, and instantly pursued by the party, in the expectation of cutting them off before they could apprize Montoungbo of our approach; but when on the point of attaining the fugitives, at our egress from a narrow defile, we found ourselves within a few yards of the enemy's bivouac, where more than five hundred well-armed men were assembled, and who, on the first alarm, hastily attempted a retreat to an adjoining ridge of hills, surmounted by walls and pagodas. Before, however, this could be effected, they were charged by the body-guard, who cut down nearly a fourth of their number, and dispersed the remainder in every direction, some flying to their boats, and others to the hills, where the acclivity prevented a pursuit, and from whence, on recovering from their fright, they opened a sharp fire of musketry, and lavished upon us all the choicest epithets the Burman slang afforded. A feigned charge made

them desist, and the body-guard then returned to camp, with the gratification of knowing that although they had scarcely a man wounded, the Pinjalla Woon, a chief of high rank, had been left dead on the field, and that Montoungbo, as it appeared from subsequent information, had shared the same fate.

On the 31st, the army advanced to Lapandyoung, within three miles of Yaynangheoum; and in the evening we were agreeably surprised by the arrival of a boat from Ava, containing Dr. Sandford of the Royals, on his parole; three European soldiers, who had been captured at the commencement of the war; and the master of a little gun-boat which had sailed into Martaban by mistake, and was seized by the enemy. They were accompanied by Dr. Price, an American missionary, Lameinzerai, and two other Burmans. When stepping out of the boat, our unfortunate countrymen had a very grotesque appearance; their hair was long and hanging over their ears, they had all long beards, and their clothes were made of Tartan cloth, fabricated into shirts and trowsers. Dr. Sandford could scarcely be recognized, and it was some time before we guessed the meaning of this strange apparition. Two of the soldiers abovementioned had been taken prisoners at Rangoon in July 1824. On their seizure they were thrown into a war-boat, and carried to Denobiu, whence they were transferred to Ava, heavily ironed, and, in common with the other prisoners of war, were each delivered in charge to certain chieftains, who were

obliged to hold themselves responsible for their re-appearance. They had been sent down to Melloon for the purpose of delaying our proceedings there, and arrived within a short distance of the fort on the 19th, having passed a reinforcement of five thousand men, who were marching to join Prince Memiaboo.

An affecting scene occurred at the meeting of one of the soldiers with his comrades. It appeared that he was married, and retained much affection for his wife, who, on the report of his captivity, had taken a second husband, but knowing nothing of this, the poor fellow's first question to his comrades was, "How is my dear wife?" "Why, Lord bless you!" answered one of his acquaintance, "she was married again eighteen months since!" This shock, after all his dangers and escapes, was too much for the disconsolate husband, and he instantly burst into a flood of tears.

Dr. Price had been released from confinement some time previous to this, and having formerly been much confided in by the Burman court, was selected to accompany these first-fruits of its tardy repentance, and try, if possible, to make conciliatory arrangements with the British. The reports which had hitherto been made to the King were so contradictory, that his Majesty, though personally anxious to terminate hostilities, was completely led away by the ascendancy of the war faction, which had lately received an accession of strength by the arrival of the Raj Gooroo. When he joined the court, the King had nearly con-

sented to fulfil the stipulations of the treaty, but his advice changed the face of affairs: he represented that the British army was suffering most severely from the cholera morbus, and would soon be completely destroyed; and it was only when Melloon fell into our power, an event which could not be concealed from the Golden Foot, that he again resolved to try the effects of negociation.

Dr. Sandford had accompanied Dr. Price, for the purpose of convincing us that the court was sincere in its overtures. On his first arrival in Ava, he, with the other prisoners, had been ironed, but having been successful in curing an infant of the royal family, who had been seized with the cholera, he was released, and allowed to remain with Dr. Price. The latter was completely naturalized in Ava, having married a common Burman woman, stone blind, whom he had converted to Christianity.

On the 1st of February, Drs. Price and Sandford returned to Ava, with an intimation from the British commissioners, that they would not advance beyond Pagahm Mew for twelve days, within which time they expected that the ratified treaty, prisoners, and twenty-five lacks, should be delivered to them.

Several Europeans still remained prisoners at Ava, and their treatment fluctuated according to the intelligence received at Ava from the Burman army. If news arrived of a successful engagement, the prisoners were insulted and bullied; and when the reverse was the case, they experienced more kindness.

The King, individually, behaved very well to the prisoners of war: he ordered a coat and knapsack to be given them from the spoils of Kykloo, and twice a year gave them clothes, and allowed a certain quantity of rice daily, but which not proving sufficient to support them, they were obliged to beg about the streets for more. On one occasion, in order to propitiate Gaudma, it was proposed to take out the entrails of the poor wretches, and present them as an offering; but this was overruled by the King, who said they might do what they pleased with the prisoners, provided their lives were preserved*. The European residents at Ava, who had been seized on the commencement of hostilities, were all confined and ironed in one common prison; their lot was, therefore, far worse than that of such as were made prisoners in the field. We passed through Yaynangheoum on the 1st of February, and moved on to Tantabain, a large village situated in a valley on the banks of a river which unites with the Irrawaddy, and where a deputation awaited us from the inhabitants who had fled to the jungle. This village (as well as all those we had lately passed) was surrounded by a railing, into which the prickly byer-bush had been interlaced, so as to form a capital defence against the intrusion of cattle; and that, if properly defended, would prove

* This anecdote was mentioned to the author by one of the prisoners; but, from the circumstance of such a proceeding being in direct contradiction to the general tenor of the Budh religion, it is, most probably, exaggerated.

a species of fortification, which, though rude and barbarous, could not easily be forced.

The ground, for several miles in the vicinity of Yaynangheoum and Tantabain, produces the famous petroleum, which is so commonly used in Ava, and constitutes one of its greatest articles of trade. As we marched over the arid hills where the wells were sunk, we could perceive the air to be strongly impregnated with the fumes of the oil; and in the neighbourhood of the small villages on the road, piles of jars were to be seen, intended to receive it for use. Some of the wells which were near the road, enabled us to see the manner in which the oil is procured; but the absence of the workmen, and the rapidity of our march, prevented my gaining much information on the subject. The shaft is sunk of a square form, and supported by wooden frames; and at about the depth of one hundred and fifty feet, the oil is generally to be met with floating on the water, which exudes from the sides of the well. When drawn, it is separated from the water, and transported in jars to the river side, where boats are constantly employed in distributing it to the different parts of the empire. The oil is of a dirty green colour; it has a considerable degree of consistency, and a most offensive and penetrating odour, and is used by the Burmahs for lamps, coarse painting, and occasionally as an external medicine. Captain Cox states that the cost of sinking a well amounts to two thousand ticals, and the annual profit about one thousand;

and, by the same authority, we learn that each well is said to produce one thousand eight hundred and twenty-five pounds of oil daily. The general aspect of the country now was very barren; not a blade of grass or spot of verdure were to be seen, so that our horses and bullocks were nearly starved; and the ground was broken into numerous small hills, divided here and there by a deep ravine. The trees, stunted in their growth, were completely parched, and seemed as if they had been blighted and scathed by some conflagration; and to crown the desolate picture, the villages, though not destroyed, were entirely deserted by the inhabitants.

On the 3rd of February we arrived at Pakangyeh, opposite to Sembeghewn, the point to which we had been looking forward with so much anxiety, as the spot where we were to meet with the Arracan army, should it have penetrated to the Irrawaddy: but although the commander-in-chief, Sir Edward Paget, had shown great judgment in selecting Arracan as a point whence to make an impression on Ava, by marching over the mountains direct on the capital, his judicious arrangements were not carried into execution; and the advance of the British force from Arracan was now countermanded after that army had been re-organized, though, if its movements had been properly timed, a column might have proved of much service, not only by attracting the attention of the enemy, but also by opening a short and easy communication with our own provinces.

At Pakangyeh Prince Memiaboo had commenced a series of entrenchments, which our rapid approach obliged him to evacuate; and the force under Prince Menzaghee, near Chalain Mew, likewise fell back and concentrated at Pagahm Mew, the ancient capital of the empire. It might be supposed that, after the repeated defeats the Burman armies had sustained, the court of Ava would have seen the folly of prolonging hostilities, and have gladly availed itself of the first opportunity to conclude a peace: but, although such were his sentiments, the weak, vacillating monarch had scarcely despatched Dr. Price to our army, before he was induced to change his opinion; and when the latter returned to Ava, he found that pacific measures were no longer in agitation, and that the government breathed nothing but defiance and hostility. It appears that the King, after debating for some time, was not averse to treat with the British, should they advance as far as Pagahm Mew; but the Queen strenuously opposed such a proceeding, and recommended him to fly from Ava, with her and his treasures, and take refuge at Monchaboo, the former residence and patrimony of Alomprah, which is situated about forty miles to the north of Ava, on the opposite side of the river. Boats and carts were accordingly held in readiness for a move, when the Prince of Sarawaddy addressed the King, and told him that it would be derogatory to his dignity, and contrary to the majesty of a king, to fly from his capital; and that his best plan was to make peace with the Eng-

lish. Whilst the King hesitated between these opposite counsels, a man of the name of Tayeah Soogean, who held the office of attweynwoon at court, offered his services to his Majesty, and said that with thirty thousand men he would undertake to proceed to Pagahm Mew, and free the empire from the rebellious strangers, as we were termed by the sycophants of the Burman court. His offer was instantly accepted: the singular title of Naiwoon Barein, or "king of hell," was conferred upon him, and he was directed forthwith to assume the command of the fifteen thousand men then assembled at Pagahm Mew: immediate steps were taken to raise a considerable force, and bounty as high as three hundred ticals was offered, but with little or no success, as scarcely any augmentation was effected. In addition to the resources of his own dominions, the King of Ava, some time previous to this, had sought for aid from the neighbouring powers, and had written with urgency to the Emperor of China, requesting that an army might be sent to his assistance; but his celestial Majesty prudently declined interfering—and to a second demand for succour, replied, that if he was to send an army it would lead him into quarrels and disputes which were best avoided. In case, however, the British should expel the King of Ava from his dominions, he offered him an asylum in China, and promised not to deliver him up to the English; and also to act as a mediator between him and his enemy, and endeavour to settle our disputes.

After the "king of hell" arrived at Pagahm Mew, and had assumed the command of the army, Prince Memiaboo, the Kee Woonghee, and Kollein Menghie passed through there on their return from Melloon; and as the former still considered himself the first in command, he sent for the upstart general to come and speak with him. This order, however, the latter refused to obey, sending back word to the prince that he was now general, and would have nothing to say to him; so that the three fugitive chieftains were obliged to leave the camp and proceed to a small village above Pagahm, where they awaited the result of the expected action.

On the 8th, the Naiwoon Barein prepared for the contest; and leaving eight thousand men within the walls of Pagahm, took post himself with the remainder, about three miles in advance near the Lodagunga Pagoda, amidst innumerable old pagodas and ruins, which were separately susceptible of being converted into so many small fortresses. Here, with his army extended in a crescent, he awaited the approach of the British; and now, for the first time, the enemy appeared inclined to meet us openly in the field. Sir A. Campbell, who had received intimation of the force opposed to him, directed General Cotton to join him with the forty-first and eighty-ninth regiments, on the night of the 8th; but even then his force amounted to only nine hundred European soldiers, and as many Sepoys,—the forty-seventh and

eighty-seventh regiments, with Colonel Shawe, not having yet joined from Toundwain.

On the morning of the 9th, he advanced from Yebbay, and had not proceeded very far before he perceived the enemy, who instantly pushed forward from the right and left flank, with the intention of surrounding the British column. His Majesty's thirteenth light infantry, under the personal direction of Sir A. Campbell, charging the enemy's left, instantly dispersed the force opposed to it, but was in turn assailed by about six hundred of the Cassay cavalry, who would have succeeded in cutting off a number of the men, had they not been repulsed by the fire of Captain Lumsden's horse-artillery; whilst to the left of our line his Majesty's thirty-eighth regiment, led by Brigadier-general Cotton, drove back the enemy at the point of the bayonet, and closely pursuing the fugitives, did not allow them time to rally. A stockade which protected their right flank was gallantly carried by the same corps, and the garrison driven down to the bank of the river, where part of it was bayoneted, and the remainder, consisting of about three hundred men, dashed into the Irrawaddy, and were for the most part drowned. Meanwhile, his Majesty's forty-first and eighty-ninth regiments repelled an attack upon our centre, and the column then advanced on Pagahm Mew, which was immediately successfully stormed, with little opposition, by the thirteenth light infantry, thus placing

in our possession fifty-five pieces of cannon, and a quantity of ammunition. Several light guns were fastened on carriages capable of being dragged by oxen; and it would seem that the Burmahs had been trying to profit by our mode of conveying artillery, as this arrangement was unusual amongst them.

This affair, which was nearly bloodless on our side, terminated at length the efforts of the Burmahs to resist our further progress: their army was now irretrievably dispersed; nor did there remain between us and the capital of the empire, out of the boasted myriads with which his Majesty of the Golden Foot had threatened our destruction, any larger force than about four or five thousand men, who were embodied as guards for his personal protection; and these, it was to be presumed, were as little inclined to encounter us in the field as would be those of their countrymen who had already experienced, to their cost, the effects of British discipline, combined with the persevering enterprise of our gallant commander.

We were obliged to halt at Pagahm for some days; and this delay enabled us to bestow some time in examining the curious remnants of antiquity which are here extant.

Pagahm Mew, about five centuries since, was the seat of government; but Ava having become the favourite metropolis, and the splendour of royalty being transferred thither, Pagahm gradually fell to decay, and at the present period does not contain many inhabitants. The town was formerly sur-

rounded by a brick wall now in ruins, and a wide ditch. The gates, in two or three places where their remains are rather perfect, appear to have been arched over, and the walls must have been of considerable height and great thickness. Within the town are numerous pagodas; and in the surrounding plain, for several miles, the eye meets with a most interminable succession of ruins, which completely verify the Burman saying, when speaking of an impossibility, that "it would be as easy to count the pagodas at Pagahm!"

Pagahm Mew is the only town we saw during our stay in Ava which possessed any fine monuments of antiquity, to show to the present age the splendour and grandeur which had formerly existed in that country. It was impossible to move a few yards without seing the ruins of religious edifices. Some appeared to have been splendidly carved and adorned; others, from the lapse of time, had fallen so much to decay, that they were scarcely distinguishable from the adjoining rubbish. Here you would see a mouldering arch still retaining its tottering position by the aid of natural ligatures of strong parasitic plants, and sheltering under its venerable cover a mutilated image of Gaudma: whilst in its vicinity the ruins of large vaulted chambers and galleries could be distinctly traced; and, strewed over the plain, many immense pagodas, whose stable construction had withstood the ravages of age and of the elements, towered over the minor edifices, and

appeared like so many magnificent mausoleums. Indeed, the whole scene, from the peculiar style of architecture, and dreary, desolate appearance of the temples, seemed like a gigantic burial-ground. Occasionally a new pagoda, or an old one lately repaired, attested the devotion of the present population; but these instances were mere trifles when compared with the remnants of days of yore. One edifice particularly attracted my attention, from its being totally different to any I had seen. It was of a quadrangular form and large dimensions, and entered by several arched gateways. A vaulted gallery ran round the interior, and in the centre was an image of Gaudma. Above this pile rose a second, similar in design but smaller, and the whole was surmounted by a small pagoda.

The Burman arches are very neatly made, and their vaulted roofs appear to be built with great stability; but, unfortunately, the art of vaulting is now quite lost to the Burmahs, and the modern attempts at arching are very rude and imperfect. The outside of the large pagoda above-mentioned was stuccoed over, and divided into compartiments, the fields of which were filled up in basso-relievo, with grotesque images of men and monsters. The contrast offered to these handsome temples by the miserable huts at their base is very melancholy, if it is considered that, throughout the whole of the empire, man is kept back from the improvements of civilization, and obliged, after the art of building has been known

for ages, still to occupy such a poor substitute for a house, when every glance he casts around him points out that it is not from ignorance or inability his habitation is thus wretched, since, to propitiate a senseless idol, these splendid specimens of architecture have at different times arisen by the labour of his fellow-countrymen. Near the walls of Pagahm, under a grove of trees, were several kioums of great antiquity, and beautifully carved. These ancient buildings I invariably observed to be much better ornamented than those which have been erected of late years: everything, indeed, we saw, as a work of art, appeared to have deteriorated from former days, and would induce the belief that the Burman nation was fast receding in the scale of civilization. By far the most beautiful place of worship we had seen, and, in point of elegance, superior to the famed Shoé Dagon, was a pagoda situated a quarter of a mile from the east gate of Pagahm. It was built in the form of a cross; the walls were about seventy feet high, and from their summit rose a delicate spire surmounted by a Tee. The interior consisted of four arched passages entered at each end by a lofty Gothic arch, and leading into two vaulted aisles about sixty feet high, very narrow, and aired by arched windows. These passages ran round the centre of the building, where, facing each entrance, were placed in large niches, four stupendous gilt images of Gaudma, fifty feet high. In the sides of the galleries were niches containing stone idols; and

at the west gate was a stone, with the impression of Buddha's feet. Lofty folding-doors of open wood-work defended each entrance from intruders; and both the inside and outside of the building were neatly stuccoed and whitewashed, and adorned with a variety of images of Gaudma, griffins, sphinxes, and monsters. A spacious area, well paved with flag-stones and encircled by a brick wall, surrounded the building, and contained poles supporting the Henzah, chattahs, and all the rest of the religious paraphernalia.

The Shoezeegoon, as this temple is called, was erected many years since; and, like the Shoemadoo, is said to have been the work of supernatural agency. Some centuries past, when this building was commenced, the workmen employed in its construction, who were advancing but slowly in their undertaking, were surprised one morning on observing that although they had ceased their labours at sunset, a most extraordinary addition had been made to the edifice during the night; and, on inquiry, the actors in this deed could not be heard of: every one disclaimed any knowledge of the transaction, which it was supposed none but immortal hands could have performed; and the workmen again resumed their labour, leaving off, as before, at dusk. The next morning the same prodigy appeared: day after day their wondering eyes were gratified with the gradual increase of the building; and at last it attained its present form, when both the visible and invisible

architects ceased from their toils, leaving a reputation of great sanctity attached to this singular edifice.

Whilst I was examining the curiosities of the spot, a number of young girls, and two or three men, dressed in their holiday clothes, entered the gates for the purpose of paying homage at the shrine of Gaudma, and presenting an offering of a number of small wax-tapers, which they lit and placed at the foot of one of the colossal images. This illumination, seen at the end of the long, dark aisle, had a very pretty effect, and showed to great advantage the disparity of size of the humble adorers of Gaudma and the huge representations of that god, which every now and then emitted a brilliant flash as its gilded surface reflected the rays of light thrown on it by the tapers, or disappeared in the obscurity when the wind rushed through the vaulted passage of the temple and almost extinguished the candles.

Adjoining the Shoezeegoon was another edifice, exceedingly worthy of remark, as containing a great variety of Burman paintings. A vaulted gallery, enclosing a small chamber, and covered by a pinnacled roof, formed this Burman Louvre; and on the walls, in fresco, were described numerous groups of figures pursuing different occupations, and crowded together as thick as possible. Here you see a number of women carrying their offerings to a temple; a little further on is a river, with boats plying on the surface, and fish, larger than the men, putting their

heads above the water. Another space represents a group of prisoners, with their hands tied behind their backs, waiting the approach of an infuriated elephant sent to destroy them; and a line of soldiers, drawn up with great regularity, some armed with spears, others with muskets, offers an excellent specimen of the Burman warriors.

Indeed, the various figures pourtrayed on the walls cannot be enumerated: elephants, camels, horses, deer, dogs, men, and women, were there promiscuously depicted; and, though with the most perfect disregard of anything like perspective, were still not devoid of merit. The edging which surrounded these drawings, and divided them from the ornaments on the cieling, was a beautiful performance, and the exact counterpart of the borders of a Cashmere shawl: the cieling, also, was brilliantly ornamented with a diversity of rich patterns, similar to those of a carpet, but showing a great variety, every small division being of a different design from the preceding one, and the whole executed with the greatest neatness and precision.

Although the drawings were of great age, and that no pains had been taken to preserve them from the effects of damp, they still retained the most brilliant and vivid hues, and were not in the least falling to decay; consequently the colours used must have been of a very superior kind to any now known.

On the 13th, Dr. Price again made his appearance in our camp, bringing with him Dr. Sandford, who

had been released. The Burman chieftains were perfectly astonished when they saw the latter return to Ava, and considered it a very convincing proof of our good faith; but still they professed themselves afraid of paying the money demanded, lest, after receiving it, we should march on and capture the metropolis.

At one moment the King had expressed his intention of personally taking the command of his army at Pagahm Mew, and houses for his reception were erected at different stations on the river between Ava and Pagahm. At the latter town a very handsome bamboo palace had been made; but the ardour of his Majesty having subsequently subsided, it became the quarters of some of our troops!

The "king of hell," notwithstanding his disaster at Pagahm, had the audacity to present himself before the King at Ava, and to assure him that, although he had been unsuccessful, if his Majesty would grant a thousand men more, and allow him again to try his fortune, he would positively defeat us.

The King heard him with patience, and allowed him to finish his tale; but it was no sooner concluded, than, making a motion with his javelin to the surrounding attendants, they seized the unfortunate chief, and dragged him off to punishment. During the plenitude of his power, the cruelty and rapaciousness of this man had been unbounded; and the King, referring to his past conduct, said, as he issued the mandate for his execution, "Take away that

wretch, and let him suffer the same punishment he has so often inflicted on my poor subjects."

He was instantly hurried forth, and whilst on his way to the place of execution, suffered every indignity which the infuriated guards could inflict. Yet, even at this awful moment, a fine sentiment of loyalty burst from him; for, when on the point of losing sight of the imperial palace, he suddenly turned round, and inclining his head, said, "Let me make one parting obeisance to the residence of my sovereign." A few moments more terminated his existence: he was thrown under the feet of horses and elephants, and trampled to death. Thus were rewarded the brave, though unavailing exertions of the only individual in the Empire, who, in its most critical hour of danger, had courage enough to step forward in his country's defence; and whatever, therefore, may have been the faults of such a man, we cannot but feel regret that the only crime for which he suffered, was his having displayed a patriotic devotion to his country, at a time when, with very few exceptions, every other courtier had abandoned it to the encroachments of a victorious enemy.

The remnants of the Pagahm army, amounting to fifteen hundred men, retired to Yeppandine, within twenty-five miles of the capital, where they formed a camp, and were joined by Prince Memiaboo, the Kee Woonghee, and Kollein Mengie, all of whom were in great disgrace at court.

During the few days we unavoidably remained at

Pagahm Mew, waiting for provisions and the junction of Brigadier Shawe's column, many hundred boats and canoes were constantly coming down the river, containing families who had been obliged, by the Burmahs, to leave their habitations on our approach, and retire to the rear of the army.

A portion of these unfortunate people belonged to Shoedoung Mew, and other places near Prome, and for the last nine months had been obliged to live in their boats. The number of families we had released by our late movements, was enough to people half the lower provinces, and we now understood why so many of the villages had remained deserted at a time when we supposed the whole of the peasantry had returned to their habitations.

The system pursued by the Burman government of devastating the country, would have proved very detrimental, and, indeed, almost ruinous to us, if the chieftains had latterly been able to enforce it: but the rapidity of our successes deranged all their plans; and as they had to contend with the wishes of the people, who, when they found that we treated them kindly, no longer fled from us, their measures, tending to depopulate the provinces as we advanced, proved ineffectual: indeed, all those who, at the first moment of alarm, had retired, or been driven from their houses, availed themselves of every favourable opportunity to accept the protection which we held out to them.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Army advances from Pagahm—Dr. Price arrives with Treasure—Repulse of the third Madras Light Infantry, at Sitang—Capture of that Stockade by Colonel Pepper—Encamp at Yandaboo—A Deputation and Treasure arrive from Ava—Conference with the Burman Commissioners—Treaty of Yandaboo, signed 24th of February—The Woonghee returns to Ava—English Officers sent to the Capital—Their Reception—Audience of the King—The British Army embarks for Rangoon 8th of March, 1826—Remarks.

Five days halt at Pagahm Mew having enabled Colonel Shawe to close on us, we resumed our march on the 16th, and leaving a very beautiful gilt pagoda, and an extensive village to our left, encamped on the bank of the river at Paulain. The country was still barren, producing barely sufficient vegetation for the nourishment of our cattle; but during the two succeeding marches, the soil improved in appearance, and bore the marks of having been recently and extensively cultivated with grain, beans, and corn of different kinds. The ground, generally speaking, was level, and we now and then met with extensive plains. On halting at our ground of encampment, near Yebbay, on the 18th, we found that a deputation had arrived from Ava; and about an hour afterwards, we heard the war-boat song, and saw six large war-boats, bearing the royal colours, pull past our camp with the greatest regularity

and rapidity, and stop near Sir A. Campbell's tent. They contained Dr. Price, Mr. Judson, Lieutenant Bennett of the royal regiment, and thirty-five Sepoys and camp-followers who had been taken prisoners at Wattegaun, or whilst straying away from the camp.

On this occasion Dr. Price was the bearer of professions of submission from the Burman court, and had with him six lacks of rupees*, which were sent for the purpose of delaying us; but these the British commissioners refused to accept, and informed Dr. Price that, unless the whole of the British prisoners, twenty-five lacks, and the ratified treaty, were delivered within five days, the present terms of peace would cease to exist, and other stipulations be made, of a much harsher nature. At the same time the General expressed his determination to advance on the capital, without listening to any other conditions than those already proposed. The inhabitants of Ava, in the greatest alarm, were now fast deserting it; more than a third of the population had already fled, and the king and royal family were prepared to start when Dr. Price left the capital.

Such, indeed, was the general panic, that our morning gun having been heard by the Burman deputation on their way to Yebbay, they immediately despatched a swift boat to Ava with the unwelcome tidings of our near approach.

* 60,000*l.*

Yet, notwithstanding these apprehensions of danger, the Burman government, at this crisis, could not be persuaded to put faith in our sincerity. Treacherous and designing as they had repeatedly proved themselves, the heads of the empire considered it impossible that the British could be actuated by any other motive than deceit in offering to leave Ava unmolested, on the fulfilment of the original treaty. They could not divest themselves of the idea that, if all the money was paid, we should nevertheless retain the country; a feeling arising from the circumstance that, in all their wars, territorial aggrandisement had been their object, and it was natural to suppose that we, in like manner, would retain the provinces we had conquered after such a laborious war. The refusal of the commissioners to accept the six lacks, and the firmness of their conduct, produced, however, a beneficial result, by showing the Burmahs that money was not our great object, and that we would not depart from our original demands upon them.

With this ultimatum Messrs. Price and Judson returned to Ava; and the army, the next morning, after marching over some plains totally free from jungle and well cultivated, halted at the town of Toundwain. It was very neat and extensive, and surrounded by a well-built timber stockade. Within the town was a collection of pagodas and poonghis' houses; and it must have contained a number of inhabitants, none of whom, however, stayed to see us

approach. On the opposite bank of the river the case was quite different; there the villagers remained quietly in their huts, and even brought down provisions for sale to the flotilla.

Some days previous to this, intelligence had been received from Colonel Pepper's force near Pegue, announcing the repulse of the third regiment of the Madras light infantry before the stockade of Sitang; and we now heard that Colonel Pepper had subsequently captured the work. That officer, with the column destined to attack Tongho, left Pegue in December; but, on his arrival at Shoegein, found that the enemy still retained a force at Sitang, on the left bank of the river of the same name; and, in order to expel this detachment, he directed Lieutenant-colonel Conry to return to the last-mentioned place, with the third Madras light infantry. On the 5th of January, he appeared in front of the works and directed an assault, which, notwithstanding his gallant exertions, proved unsuccessful. Colonel Conry himself was killed on the scaling-ladders; another officer shared the same fate, and three more were wounded, together with a few of the men. On receiving this intelligence, Colonel Pepper instantly marched to Sitang, with part of the Madras European regiment, and some Native infantry. After cannonading for some hours during the morning of the 11th, he divided his force into three columns, led them to the assault, and succeeded in capturing the stockade, though with the severe loss of Captains Kersham

and Stedman killed, five officers wounded, and eighty men killed and wounded. The enemy left three hundred dead on the field.

On the 20th we continued advancing, and after passing a well-cultivated and apparently populous country, halted at Goungwain. The Irrawaddy, in this part of Ava, acts the same beneficent part to the plains on its banks that the Nile does in Egypt; for the soil, not being naturally rich, derives most of its fertility from the periodical overflows of the river, which occur generally three or four times annually, when the inundation in the plains we crossed this day appeared to have risen about four feet above the surface of the earth. The fields were principally planted with grain and beans, and refreshed the eye with a bright sheet of verdure, which merely required enclosing with hedges to assume quite a civilized appearance. A few bushes of dog-roses occasionally were seen; and, as they were the first we had met, we supposed them the forerunners of an improved soil and climate: we were not mistaken, for, every mile we advanced, the cultivation and population seemed to increase, and we at last congratulated ourselves on having bid farewell to the jungles and morasses of Pegue and the lower part of Ava.

The next morning we marched through Tirroup Mew, or Chinese City, which, as well as the adjoining district, was so called, in commemoration of the annihilation of an army of Chinese by the Burmahs, at

the time Pagahm was the seat of empire. The survivors of the action were allowed to settle here; and the remains of a brick wall, which still can be seen, prove that the town must have been of considerable importance. On communicating with our flotilla, we had the satisfaction of finding that Mr. Gouger, an English gentleman who had been residing at Ava in a mercantile capacity, when war was declared, and an Armenian, a relation to Mr. Sarkies, had been sent down to us. Previous to their leaving Ava, a woondock was sent to them with a message from the King, purporting that their property, which, to a large amount, had been confiscated, would be restored to them; but that matters could not be settled for several days; and that, as their presence was urgently required by the British, it should be transmitted afterwards. As the payment of all that had been seized from the prisoners was one of our demands, this proceeding on the part of the Golden Foot appeared to intimate his acquiescence in the terms of peace; and we looked forward most anxiously for the arrival of a communication from the court before the two days should elapse which still remained for them to decide whether or not we should storm the capital. Indeed, on the 22nd, when we encamped at Yandaboo, on the banks of the river, after passing the junction of the Keenduem and Irrawaddy rivers, and found ourselves within three marches of Ava,

it is difficult to assert whether we would not have preferred running all risks and taking the capital, to here closing the war.

We had not been encamped long when a war-boat was observed rounding a point some distance up the river; and, on its nearer approach, we discovered that it contained Dr. Price, who informed Sir A. Campbell that he was accompanied by Mrs. Judson, and two other prisoners. Twenty-five lacks of rupees* were in the war-boats which followed him, and the premier Woonghee, lord of Laykaing, and Attweynwoon Shwaguin, had been sent with full powers by the King, to concede every point we demanded; but being doubtful how we should act after receiving the money and prisoners, had remained at Yeppandine, twenty miles in the rear. Seven large war-boats, with a well-armed crew, contained the treasure; and a part of the beach was instantly appropriated for them, under charge of a guard, to prevent the obtrusive curiosity of our army. A couple of tents were pitched for the reception of the Burman chieftains, when they should arrive; and another for Mr. and Mrs. Judson, who, shortly afterwards, we felt unfeigned pleasure in hearing had landed from the boats.

Mrs. Judson's health had of late been very bad; and the sufferings, mental and bodily, to which that amiable and interesting woman had been exposed during

* 250,000*l.*

the confinement of her husband, were so great, that it is almost impossible to believe her fragile form could resist such accumulated distress. Her personal liberty was not restrained, and she availed herself of it to make repeated and unavailing efforts for the enlargement of her husband; but her solicitations were constantly refused, and she was even debarred from seeing him. As the nourishment of the prisoners depended solely on the exertions of their friends, she supplied Mr. Judson with food; and occasionally contrived to communicate with him by hiding a slip of paper in the spout of a teapot; and at one period, the prisoners having been moved to a place of confinement several miles from Ava, she followed, and took up her abode in a miserable hut, where, to escape insult, she assumed the Burman attire.

A more dreadful situation for a woman of feeling and education to be placed in cannot well be imagined. She possessed not a single friend to whom she might look for assistance and support: she had no home to inhabit; her daily food was of the coarsest description; and, to increase her cares, Mr. Judson's life she knew to be in the power of a cruel and sanguinary court. Yet still her strong mind and good sense enabled her to make head against her adversities, until an addition was made to her cares by the birth of her little infant; when she became so dangerously ill that Dr. Price, on being released from

prison, found her perfectly senseless; but, by timely restoratives and judicious treatment, succeeded in causing an alteration for the better in her health.

Mrs. Judson's talents are already known to the public by the publication of her clever "Letters from Burmah;" and it is a delightful task now to mention these few amongst numerous traits of benevolence, constancy, and fortitude, which embellish the mind of a lady whose unfortunate situation during the last two years has been so much the subject of regret.

The alarms of the Woonghee and Attweynwoon having been quelled by Dr. Price's assurances of our pacific intentions towards them, they ventured to the camp; and, after taking some refreshment in the tent that had been prepared for their accommodation, walked towards the General's marquee, followed by a considerable suite, and preceded by four men with red lackered helmets, bearing long canes, with which to clear the way. Each woonghee and attweynwoon is allowed two of these attendants.

The attire of the Burman chieftains on this occasion was very different from the gaudy splendour of their habits at Neoungbenzeik and Melloon, and seemed intended to convey a sense of their present humbled state. The silk loonghee round the loins, a white cotton jacket, and muslin surcoat, constituted their dress; and they were not even adorned with the tsaloeh, but wore the undress cotton strings.

The Woonghee was an old man, of slight make and fair complexion, and very silent and reserved;

but his colleague, the Attweynwoon, whose countenance was of a swarthy hue, deeply marked by the small-pox, appeared to be a man of some cleverness. The third personage was the senior Woondock of the lootoo, of which council he had been a member forty years; but although allowed to be present at the discussion, he had no authority on the subject of the negociation. Several Saradoghees and Sandozains also attended, for the purpose of superintending the payment of the money, and transacting minor affairs.

On entering Sir A. Campbell's tent, the Burmahs seated themselves at one side of the table, whilst the General, Mr. Robertson, Captain Chads, R.N.*, and four or five officers, occupied the other; and after the customary ceremony of shaking hands and expressing their satisfaction at the pacific nature of the meeting, the commissioners proceeded to discuss the terms of peace. To a question whether they came prepared to answer our demands, and were provided with written credentials from the king, the Burmahs answered in the affirmative; and the royal mandate having been sent for, a chief soon afterwards appeared, bearing this important document, which he presented in a crouching posture to the Attweynwoon, who proceeded carefully to open its various covers. A small red velvet bag, bound with tape, and sealed with the royal signet, inclosed a cylin-

* Now senior officer of the navy, Sir J. Brisbane's bad state of health having obliged him to leave the country.

drical case made of ivory, in which was a small bag of gold cloth. When this was opened, a second, of the same costly material, wrapped with cotton, appeared, and in this was the royal order, written on a small piece of vellum paper, with a flowered gold border, and purporting that the Woonghee and Attweynwoon were directed to proceed to the British camp, and arrange all subjects of dispute, to the satisfaction of the English commissioners. To this no signature was attached, such not being customary; but the paper was declared, by Messrs. Judson and Price, perfectly satisfactory; and the articles of the treaty being then separately read, the Burmahs acquiesced to every one without demurring in the least. They also engaged themselves to procure boats sufficient for the transportation of five thousand men to Rangoon, and agreed to indemnify the prisoners for all their losses within five days.

The treaty, with some slight alterations, was the same as that proposed at Melloon; and one of the clauses being, that each power should send a resident to the court of the other, the Attweynwoon, who was the chief spokesman, observed that he did not know how the Burmahs could send a representative to the British court at London, the distance being so great. He was instantly informed that the treaty was made with the East India Company, and that the Governor-general, as the head of Indian affairs, and representative of government, was the person to whom their envoy must be accredited. This disinclination to

acknowledge the Governor-general of India on an equality with a sovereign prince, has always characterised the Burman councils; but in this instance they were so completely humbled, that they were afraid to throw the slightest difficulty in our way.

The General then acquainted the Attweynwoon that it was his intention to march a column over-land to Arracan; and further said, that no Burman troops were to approach within fifty miles of Prome, as long as we retained possession of that city; nor proceed below Pegue and Denobiu, whilst we remained at Rangoon, which town would not be evacuated until the second instalment of twenty-five lacs should be paid.

Every thing now being settled, the Attweynwoon expressed his satisfaction that the two great nations should be on amicable terms, and said, that if the Chinese dared to insult them, they would set them at defiance, since the English were their friends. It being necessary to translate the treaty into Burmah, a sufficient number of copies could not be procured till next day, and the ceremony of signing was, therefore, deferred, and another meeting agreed to on the morrow, when Sir A. Campbell invited the chieftains to dine with him. In the meantime, the Paymaster-general, Major Stock, was busily employed in receiving the treasure from the Burmahs, and found that the bullion was of every description; and for the purpose of expressing the poverty of the

Burman government, consisted of gold and silver cups, trinkets, bars of gold, coin of various nations, and even several of the gold chains of the nobility. A few bars of gold, marked with the peacock, and valued at two thousand two hundred rupees each, had been issued from the royal coffers, but a great portion of the remainder was raised by a contribution on the inhabitants.

At four o'clock on the 24th, the commissioners again assembled, and immediately signed and sealed the Treaty of Yandaboo*, the Burmahs affixing, as their signet, the impression of a peacock. This event was announced to the army by a royal salute, and immediately afterwards the Burman chieftains proceeded with Sir A. Campbell and Mr. Robertson, to view some of our troops and artillery. The thirteenth and thirty-eighth regiments chanced to be on parade at the time, and were directed to perform two or three evolutions, and charge, a manœuvre that exceedingly astonished our visitors, who, on finding themselves thus surrounded by the "rebel English strangers," did not appear quite at their ease, particularly when a large crowd of soldiers had assembled to look at the chieftains, amongst whom they ridiculously supposed was the King of Ava. Some field pieces were then brought out, and fired fifty rounds, to show the rapidity with which we could load and reload; and finally several shells and rockets were thrown across the river. During the latter part of the exhibition one

* Vide Appendix.

of the rockets exploded at the moment it left the tube, and scattered the shot around us, but fortunately without doing any injury; when Sir A. Campbell, seeing that the Burmahs were rather discomposed, informed them that they might now perceive we could make our shells explode at any distance we pleased. After this exhibition ended, one of the Burmahs was quietly asked what he thought of it? "Oh," said he, "we can do all this much better ourselves, at Ava!"

Dinner awaited the principal men in the general's tent, and they partook of almost every dish on the table, but not one of them would commence eating until the Woonghee set the example. We were obliged to cut their meat for them, as they did not know how to use a knife, and were too polite to eat with their fingers, seeing it was not our custom. Not one of the party would take a glass of wine, probably fearful lest it should be misrepresented to the King; but they entered into conversation with much ease and spirit, and the Attweynwoon declared that really the English and Burman nations were very similar to each other, being equally possessed of bravery, wisdom, talent, and every other good quality.

At half-past nine the Woonghee and Attweynwoon departed for Ava, leaving the Woondock and inferior chieftains to arrange the money transactions. Two war-boats also were left to convey a deputation of three of our officers, whom it was intended should proceed to the capital, bearing a few presents to the

King, as a proof that sincerity and confidence were established between us.

On the morning of the 26th, Captain Lumsden of the horse-artillery, Lieutenant Havelock, Deputy Assistant Adjutant-general, and Dr. Knox, proceeded up the river and reached the Burman camp at Yeppandine, when they were stopped in consequence of the King having expressed his determination not to receive the British officers, as he considered it an humiliating act, in his present humbled state.

His Majesty had remained secluded in his palace since the signature of the treaty, and was so much annoyed with the two Burman commissioners for having authorized the visit of our officers, that he threatened to behead them, should he be obliged to receive the deputation. A great sensation also was created amongst the inhabitants of the capital when they heard that the chief of the flying artillery was on his way up, as they concluded he was followed by the whole army, and so much did they dread our approach, that the Woonghee sent a message to Ava on the signature of the peace, to desire the population not to be alarmed when our salute was fired.

On this conduct of the King's being made known to Sir A. Campbell, he immediately sent to recal the deputation, but in the interim the Golden Foot had changed his mind, and sent a handsome gilt war-boat to convey the officers to Ava.

It was quite dark before they arrived, yet notwith-

standing, the King was particularly anxious to receive them; but Menzaghee and others having dissuaded him from this fancy, the audience was fixed for the morrow. In the interim the gentlemen were conducted to the house of Monshoeloo, Maywoon of one of the quarters of the palace, where an excellent repast in the English style, with a profusion of wine, was prepared for them; and on the following morning prepared to wait on his Majesty, when a discussion arose whether they should wear their swords, a point which was conceded to the Burmahs, as being in direct contradiction to the established etiquette of the court. At three o'clock the officers were summoned to proceed to the Rondaye, where another dispute arose respecting the place at which they were to take off their shoes; but it was agreed, after some demur on the part of the Burmahs, that they should not do so till at the steps of the palace.

The officers then entered the outer gate of the palace, preceded by the presents to the King; and marching through a line of soldiers, passed under three other gateways, the last defended by several pieces of cannon. Directly opposite to this was the entrance to the hall of reception, where at the upper end the royal throne was placed; but the etiquette not permitting them to march straight up to it, they were obliged to advance in a semicircular direction, in front of the troops which were drawn up in a crescent on each side. At the entrance of the hall the shoes were taken off, and during this time bands were

playing, and dancing girls exhibiting their graces to the strangers, who then entered the hall and seated themselves on the ground at about fifty feet from the vacant throne. Above them, were several members of the royal family; and the rest of the assembly was composed of the different high officers of the crown, the whole dressed in white muslin. Pickled tea, garlick, and betel, were then presented to the officers, in crystal cups, as a particular mark of favour; and shortly afterwards, the music suddenly ceased, and a dead silence pervaded the assembly. This was succeeded by a distant chaunting, which approached nearer and nearer, until the folding doors behind the throne were thrown open by invisible hands, and disclosed to view the King advancing with slow and measured steps, and dressed in a white jacket and turban, with a splendid gold chain thrown over his shoulders. His Majesty took possession of the throne, and remained perfectly motionless, except that he now and then applied to his betel-box, and occasionally lifted his eyes to look at the foreigners.

A list of the presents from the British commissioners having been read, the three officers were invested with Burman titles,* which the Golden Foot had been pleased to grant, and the ceremony consisted in binding on the forehead a piece of gold, on which their new rank was written; a ruby ring, a piece of silk, two lackered boxes, and as many cups

* Captain Lumsden was styled, "renowned and valiant Knight."

were also presented to each of them; and the King then, in an almost inaudible tone of voice, said something to those next him, who immediately asked aloud, whether the foreigners had any petition to prefer, and Captain Lumsden having replied that "he hoped the peace and friendship between the two great nations might be lasting," the audience finished by the King's retiring in the same manner that he advanced.

Captain Lumsden remained at the house of Monshoeloo during the next day, but had no opportunity of seeing much of the city, as he had received intimation that it was not according to the wishes of the King, that the English should stray far from their habitation. From the slight view the officers had of the metropolis, it struck them as being well built, but at that moment not containing the usual population. It is surrounded by a brick wall, but could have been captured by us in a few hours. Previous to the war, Ummerapoorah, twelve miles from Ava, had been the seat of empire; but a large fire consumed part of the lootoo and palace, and several unlucky omens having appeared, particularly that of a vulture perching on the piasath or spire of the royal residence, the King resolved on rebuilding the ancient capital, and in February, 1824, finished the present beautiful palace, which he took possession of with great pomp and ceremony, on the 5th of March following.

To this removal southward, many of the disasters

of the present reign are attributed, there being a prophecy existing in Ava, that the farther north the King resided, the more prosperous he would be. In May, 1824, also, the new piasath fell, and another old saying was recollected, that the seventh of the dynasty of Alomprah would be the last of his race, which number happens to fall on the present King: the peace, however, in this instance, has falsified the predictions of the Burman soothsayers. On the 4th of March, Captain Lumsden and his companions left Ava, and on their way down, had a good view of Chagain, a large city opposite, which many years ago had been the capital, and now appeared very populous. Captain Lumsden brought with him, as a present from the King, for Sir A. Campbell and Mr. Robertson, two shabby ruby rings, a few pieces of silk, and some boxes; but even this paltry gift was handsomer than the first peace-offering made in the royal name to Sir A. Campbell, and which consisted of cocoa-nuts, sugar-canes, honey, patates, walnuts, palmyra-tree, sugar, bad sweetmeats, two jars of ghee, and some nuts,—a curious sample of royal magnificence.

The dilatory manner in which the boats intended for the transportation of part of the army had been collected by the Burman chieftains, prevented Sir A. Campbell from breaking up any part of his force; but on the 5th of March, a great portion of the boats having arrived, he dispatched Captain Chads, Royal Navy, to Rangoon, with the treasure,

and ordered the eighteenth Madras Native infantry to proceed on the 6th, with the elephants of the army, towards Pakangyeh. His Majesty's first, thirteenth, thirty-eighth, forty-first, forty-seventh, and eighty-ninth regiments, and the artillery, were directed to prepare for embarkation in the boats; and his Majesty's eighty-seventh regiment, the twenty-sixth, twenty-eighth, thirty-eighth, and forty-third Madras Native infantry, Governor-general's body-guard, and artillery, were to form a column, under Colonel Hunter Blair, and march to Prome. On the 8th, Sir A. Campbell and the army left Yandaboo.

Here ended this tedious war, in a manner highly honourable to the British government, but scarcely compensating by the advantages obtained for the lavish expenditure of lives and money which took place during the contest.

Viewed in a political light, the treaty of Yandaboo is very satisfactory; as the payment of a large sum of money, and the cession of a third of the Burman empire to our government, clearly demonstrate the superiority of our force and arms, and will not fail to consolidate our influence amongst the surrounding nations; whilst, had the war continued, there is no doubt but several of the princes of India would have availed themselves of the favourable opportunity to rise in arms against us: but if we advert to the intrinsic value of territory acquired by us, the information is far from gratifying; and it seems difficult to conceive how such a large tract of ground should

present so few capabilities of being turned to advantage.

To commence with Assam, which we are nominally to place under the control of its native princes —virtually, it must be held by us. Without population or resources, this phantom kingdom, if left to itself, could not exist; and the expense and trouble of supporting it must therefore fall on the British government, which gains, in return, a few hundred square miles of mountains, jungles, and swamps.

On the throne of Munnipoor we have placed Gumbheer Singh, a member of the former royal family, who being entirely devoted to our interests, and owing his elevation to our exertions, will prove a faithful dependant, and serve, in some measure, as a barrier to any hostile irruption on our territory of Sylhet; but, in fact, the whole kingdom of Munnipoor is so perfect a wilderness, that it would offer innumerable natural obstacles to an invasion from that quarter. In other respects it is useless.

Arracan has proved the valley of death; and, after almost totally destroying General Morrison's army, is found to be too unhealthy even for those regiments stationed on the islands and sea-coast. It is covered with impenetrable jungles and forests; and is so completely intersected and inundated by rivers, creeks, and inlets from the sea, as to form a cluster of islands; thus preventing any communication between the villages, except by water. There are but very few inhabitants; and the only article in which it pro-

mises to be productive is salt. In the meantime the province is burthened with a civil and military establishment, and yields but very little revenue.

The Yomadoung or Anomectoupiou mountains, it is true, constitute a well-defined boundary between it and Ava; and, in this respect, the possession of Arracan is advantageous to us, otherwise it may be considered a drain on the finances of government.

In the possession of Tenasserim, Yeh, and part of Martaban, we have been more fortunate, and that cession seems to be the chief benefit derived from the treaty; as from these provinces we open a communication with Siam and Malaya, and, by our vicinity and intercourse, will no doubt much facilitate the commerce between those countries, hitherto but little attended to, and chiefly confined to our rising settlement at Sincapore.

Fine teak-wood forests have been discovered near the Thalueyn river (our boundary in that direction), and will consequently enable us now to derive our supplies of that valuable commodity from our own territory, instead of relying upon the exports from Rangoon, which might be rendered precarious by the exacting and vacillating character of the Burman government. The population of this coast also, though at present only estimated at forty thousand, is daily increasing by emigrations from Pegue; and it may therefore be hoped that, under the British government, Tenasserim, before many years, may prove a flourishing province.

Thus it appears, that although the territorial cession is large, it affords no accession of revenue; but, on the contrary, becomes a heavy tax on the resources of the India Company, whilst, at the same time, it increases the evil, already so much deplored, of our overgrown extent of empire; thereby not only weakening our power, but, by placing us in contact with various nations, of different manners and customs to our own, constantly involving us in fresh disputes and wars, in which our only mode of obtaining redress is by again seizing more territory; although, in so doing, we fail to indemnify ourselves. In this manner British India will continue accumulating, until, at last, the enormous fabric falls with a sudden crash, and moderation points out limits to the various nations now united under our sway.

In the instance of the Burman war, it was impossible for the British government to act otherwise than it did. It was absolutely necessary to break the haughty spirit of the court of Ava; and as the country, in its impoverished state, could not produce sufficient bullion to satisfy our pecuniary demands, it became evident that the only mode of apparent indemnification to which we could resort, was, by demanding these dependencies of the Burman empire; thereby, though not much benefiting ourselves, yet reducing Ava to its proper limits, making it acknowledge its inferiority, and providing in some measure against future aggression.

It has been asserted by many, that signing a peace

within three days' march of the capital, when there no longer existed an army to oppose us, was derogatory to the character of the British arms; but when the case is examined into, it will be clearly seen that if other measures had been pursued, they would be fraught with danger and imprudence.

The question was simply this.—If you capture Ava, what threat can you then hold out to the Burmahs; they will have lost their capital, and no longer have anything to dread; so that by flying to the jungles, they may harass and annoy the British army until at last it would be obliged to recede from its conquests, and fall back on Prome, leaving the prospect of peace further distant than before?

Allowing that we had captured Ava, it is almost impossible we could have retained our position during the rainy season, as we ran the risk of having all our supplies cut off. At six hundred miles distance from our stores, at Rangoon, we could not have ensured the arrival of provisions. The only boats employed in transporting them were the canoes of the Peguers, who, though well affected towards us, and well paid, did not like to be separated so far from their families, and be exposed to the attacks of numerous bands of robbers and soldiers, who infested the banks of the river, and constantly captured some of our provision boats. This was an evil which, with our small force, it was almost impossible to prevent. The total amount of the army at Yandaboo was not quite four thousand five hundred men,

and from it we could not spare detachments sufficiently strong to ensure their own safety, and protect the navigation of the Irrawaddy, whilst a large force would only have added to our difficulties by requiring a greater supply of provisions, without the means of transport being encreased.

Again, by taking Ava, we might have lost every thing that is now secured to us; but what should we have gained? We could only have increased our incumbrances by demanding more territory: for it is well ascertained that the Burman government has no money at its disposal.

We might have revolutionized Pegue, and if the Burmahs refused to enter into terms, have evacuated Ava proper, and devoted our cares to ensuring the stability of the new kingdom; but what loss of life and treasure would not that measure have entailed upon us? After once, under our auspices, allowing the Peguers to taste the sweets of liberty, we could not in honour have deserted them. We should have been obliged to keep a large European force at Prome and Tongho; and even admitting that a peace was made with the Burmahs on the basis of the cession of Pegue, the unavoidable bickerings and disputes between the two nations must no doubt be brought to a warlike decision, when all the labour of preceding years would prove useless, and we should find ourselves involved in endless warfare. It is better by far as affairs have terminated. There is at present but little chance of our coming in collision

with the Burmahs during many years ; and if the Peguers succeed in asserting their independence (a measure it is said they purpose attempting), Ava will no longer be viewed in any other light than that of an insignificant kingdom ; as Pegue, by emancipating herself, will deprive Ava of one of its most prolific sources of power. Although long slumbering under the yoke, the Talliens have by no means lost their native spirit ; it has merely lain dormant ; and should they prosper in their efforts to be free, there is little doubt but that Pegue, rising from its wreck, may once more become a powerful and happy nation.

Notwithstanding the different opinions which exist respecting the line of policy pursued by the government in concluding the war, it must appear evident to every one on calmly weighing the merits of the case, that we followed the only proper course; and that by not taking the capital, we lost nothing, but, on the contrary, saved all, and enabled the British name to derive fresh lustre from a war in which we had to contend, not only with the government and population, but also with the disadvantages attendant on a wild, difficult, and unexplored field of operations, the bad effects of a tropical climate, and the ravages of disease.

Never was a British army in the East worse equipped, or placed in more critical situations, than that under Sir A. Campbell ; and if we succeeded in leaving Rangoon, and marching to Prome in despite of every species of obstacle, it must entirely be attri-

buted to the enterprising active mind of that General, who made the attempt when few others would have deemed it practicable; and, by the energy of his proceedings, succeeded in the undertaking.

Every thing is now quiet; thoroughly humbled, disarmed*, and awake to their comparative insignificance, the Burmahs will not again disturb us; and it is therefore to be hoped that for many years to come an opportunity may not again occur of viewing the Burman empire in a hostile light, or of banishing an army of twenty-eight thousand men to linger out so many months in the wilds of Ava.

* The Woondock who attended at Yandaboo, stated that he was in charge of the artillery during the war, and that the loss of the Burmahs in ordnance amounted to one thousand five hundred pieces, of various calibres.

CHAPTER XVII.*

Column ordered to Aeng—We cross the River—Sembeghewn—Chalain Mew—Shoéchatoh Pagoda—Napeh Mew—Kieaan Tribes—Their Dress—History of the Kieaans—Singular mode of Tattooing—The Passine—Religion of the Kieaans—Funerals—Marriages—Laws—Weapons—We leave Doh—Method of drying Trout—Ascent of the Mountains—Nairiegain—Robberies of the Kieaans—Aeng Road—Sarowah—Enter Aeng on the 26th of March—Conclusion.

It has already been mentioned that no doubts existed in our army but that a practicable road was to be found, over the mountains, between Aeng in Arracan and Sembeghewn by which the force in that province might have co-operated with us; and Sir A. Campbell, when we halted at Pakangyeh, was so fully convinced of this fact, that he sent an overland despatch to the officer commanding in Arracan, directing a small force to be pushed forward from Aeng and Talák, in order to communicate with such detachments as he might think proper to send in that direction.

On the conclusion of hostilities, Sir A. Campbell, deeming it of the utmost importance that this inlet to the centre of Ava should be perfectly well known to us, as, in case of another war, it would most likely be one of the best points whence to make an impres-

* The contents of this chapter, with but few exceptions, were published, by order of Government, in the Calcutta Government Gazette for May or June, 1826.

sion on the enemy, determined on sending the elephants of the army to Aeng, under the escort of a battalion of Native infantry; and the Burman government being apprized of his intention, agreed to depute an officer of rank with the column, to settle any difficulties that might occur with the inhabitants, and afford every assistance in his power by pressing coolies to assist in carrying our baggage, or procuring anything we might require.

The troops destined for this service consisted of the eighteenth regiment of Madras Native infantry, fifty pioneers, and thirty-six elephants, under the command of Captain David Ross; and the chief deputed by the Burman government had formerly been governor of the province of Sandowey, when Arracan appertained to the Burmahs: he, consequently, was well acquainted with the road, and did not anticipate much difficulty.

On the 6th of March we left Yandaboo, and it being necessary to proceed as low as Pakangyeh previous to crossing the Irrawaddy, marched towards that town, where we arrived on the 13th, having previously despatched Mounza, the Sandowey Woon, in advance, to procure a sufficient number of boats to enable us to transport the men and baggage to the opposite bank. By his exertions, twelve canoes had been prepared for us, and with these we immediately began crossing the cattle and baggage: the elephants dashed into the stream guided by their mahouts, and, although the river was fifteen hundred

yards wide, had no difficulty in reaching the opposite bank.

The spot where the troops landed was on a long flat below the level of the natural bank of the river, and, consequently, under water during the rainy season; but at this time it was cultivated with tobacco, which plant grows to great perfection and abundance in these districts. The town of Sembeghewn is four miles inland; but on the banks of the river a long straggling village existed, inhabited principally by those whom the advance of the British had obliged to abandon their habitations, and who had not yet availed themselves of the opportunity offered them by the peace of again returning to their abodes. From these people we received every assistance; they furnished us with thirty boats, and the women with baskets of vegetables and fish came into camp, and soon formed a little bazaar. Twenty days' provisions were here issued to the detachment; and, on the evening of the 15th, we bade a last farewell to the Irrawaddy, and, marching through Sembeghewn, encamped on the outskirts of the town. Sembeghewn was once an extensive and flourishing town, containing three thousand inhabitants; but now not a single habitation existed, the Burman army when retiring having burned it to the ground. The inhabitants had not yet commenced rebuilding their huts: here and there some were prowling about among the embers of their houses, or, from the roadside, watching the passage of the troops, and when

the baggage passed through, some depredations were committed on the provisions; but this outrage is more likely to have been committed by some of the bands of robbers which infest the vicinity of Sembeghewn, than by the villagers, who seemed perfectly well disposed towards us.

The country round Sembeghewn is an open plain, very fertile, and highly cultivated, principally with paddy; and in the neighbourhood of the town are many small gardens, containing mango, plantain, and other fruit-trees. Through the town runs the Chalain river, which, during the rainy season, must be of considerable size.

On the 16th we marched to Chalain Mew, over a capital road made by the order of the late king, Minderaghee Prah. A brick wall, about three feet high, marked the road for a considerable distance; and over every ravine, however small, a wooden bridge had been erected. The country on both sides was laid out in paddy-fields as far as the eye could reach, and thickly interspersed with villages: it is irrigated by means of the Chalain river, which the inhabitants dam up, and cause to flow into the adjoining fields. Wells, also, are to be met with in great abundance; and sacred groves, with superb kioums, and pagodas, are seen all along the road.

The suburbs of Chalain Mew, as also the town itself, had fallen a prey to the flames, and the only buildings saved from the conflagration were the kioums, and other religious edifices: this wanton act

was said to have been committed by some of the disorganized bands of the Burman army, without the knowledge of the chieftains. Round Chalain Mew are the remains of a lofty brick wall, and in those places where it had fallen to decay a capital teak-wood stockade was erected at the commencement of the war. The situation of the work is very strong, and on two sides completely defended by large jeels, whence, by cutting a small bank, sufficient water might be procured to form a wet ditch round the fortifications. The brick portion of the latter is well worthy of remark, as offering a more perfect specimen of ancient fortification than any of the old forts we had hitherto passed through.

One part of the wall, which seemed to have suffered less from the ravages of time than the remainder, particularly attracted my attention: its outer height was fifty feet, inside it rose about thirty feet, above the level of the town; and this must be about six feet below the original elevation, the turrets which formerly adorned the summit having fallen down. This great height of brick-work was only between three and four feet thick, supported by slight abutments every fifty yards, and it really seemed wonderful that so much of it still remained, though in many places tottering on its base. Near the summit of the walls, were apertures intended to receive the beams by which the platforms whence the defendants fired used to be sustained; and on inquiry, it appears that these walls were erected long antecedent to the use of

fire-arms, the popular tradition being that Chalain Mew was built one thousand five hundred years ago, at the time Pagahm was the seat of government, and that it used to be frequently honoured with the residence of the sovereign. Prince Menzaghee occupied this post for seven months, and only left it when the English army approached Pakangyeh.

Chalain Mew contained ten thousand inhabitants, and is the chief town of the district of Chalain, which consists of between five and six hundred square miles, and has a population of two hundred thousand souls. Sixty-four villages are scattered over this fertile tract, and furnished, during the war, ten thousand men, as their quota to the army, of whom only one-half returned from Chalain Mew. A road branches off to Talak, by which it was originally intended a part of the detachment should proceed, but the result of my inquiries as to its practicability proved so very unsatisfactory, that it was deemed proper to give up all idea of attempting it.

I was informed that a footpath existed over the mountains to Talak, occasionally frequented by a few itinerant merchants, and that ponies and bullocks were the only beasts of burden by which the road could be traversed. There is a great scarcity of water for four marches,—so much so, that those who went that way used always to carry a supply of water in bamboos, the chance of discovering crevices in the rocks, or pools of water, being very precarious, and if found, would not prove sufficient for more than twenty or

thirty men. The mountains are very steep; and though the road was naturally so very bad, the Burmahs, at the time they expected an attack from us in that quarter, determined on entirely destroying the medium of communication, and, accordingly, scarped part of the road, in others, felled trees across it, and so completely closed the passages, that during two years, scarcely an individual had passed that way.

The Talak road was not followed by either of the Burman armies, the Maha Bundoolah having marched by Aeng, both in going to and returning from Arracan; and the Arracan army, after its defeat, was so completely dispersed, that the men which composed it, striking into the mountains, followed no regular track, but fled straight across the hills.

As soon as it was known through the country that we had arrived at Chalain as friends, the whole population flocked in to gaze at us; and our breakfast party, which had assembled under the shade of a fine tamarind-tree, soon found itself enclosed within a circle of several hundred Burmahs, sitting in the posture of respect, and watching our motions with unfeigned astonishment. Their conduct, however, was perfectly inoffensive and submissive; they had not the most remote idea of incommoding us, and on being told to move farther off, instantly departed, and satisfied their curiosity at a distance. The English strangers, whose fame had been bruited through the country, far and near, must have been viewed as perfect curiosities by the inhabitants of these districts, who

had never had an opportunity of seeing us; and in one instance, when I was riding through a village at the head of the advanced-guard, an old woman who had been attracted to the road side by the novel scene, on seeing me, actually prostrated herself, and began saying her prayers. At Chalain we procured some Burmahs as Coolies, and on the 17th resumed our march, and leaving the high road to the right, struck off considerably to the southward, in order to encamp in the vicinity of water, none being procurable on the main route this season, except by making very long marches. For four months of the year, during the prevalence of the monsoon, water is to be met with, and it was at the close of that season the Burman army passed. Several thickly-inhabited villages existed on both sides of the road, and the division marched through one of considerable size, called Pounglahang, near which we encamped on the banks of a lake covered with myriads of wild fowl. It was most gratifying to remark the confidence exhibited by the villagers, so very different from the conduct hitherto pursued by them since the arrival of the British in Ava. No longer forsaking their houses and flying with their families and effects into the jungle, they quietly pursued their daily avocations, and only noticed the approach of the troops by running to the road side when we passed, and looking with astonishment at the first white face they had ever seen.

The difference of soil between the east and west

banks of the Irrawaddy at this part of the country, is very surprising.

The east, barren, arid and parched up, particularly the neighbourhood of the petroleum wells, produces not the slightest vegetation: scarcely a blade of grass is to be met with: whilst the west is fertile, well watered, abounding with fine cattle and excellent pasturage, and producing all the requisites of food. Sugar is extracted from the palmyra-tree in considerable quantity, and salt-petre is also manufactured.

The road next day ran for some miles over an extensive plain, laid out in paddy-fields, and bearing the traces of being completely inundated during the monsoon; indeed, the whole country between this and the Irrawaddy, at that season of the year, is covered with water. After marching eight miles, we came to the Moh river, a fine stream of water, fordable about knee deep, and forming the boundary between the districts of Chalain and Lehdine. This derives its source from the Arracan mountains, and even in the summer season presents sufficient water for small canoes, many of which were plying backwards and forwards, mostly superintending the course of several rafts of bamboos which are cut in the mountains, and thence floated down to supply the inhabitants of the plains with the materials for building. A large and populous village stood on the bank of the river, and many others lower down were discernible.

On the 19th we marched through a highly culti-

vated country, embellished with groves of palmyra, and full of populous villages, which obtained their water from a small stream conducted by means of dams, from the Mine river, thus answering the two-fold purpose of supplying the inhabitants and irrigating the soil. At the village of Shoegioum were several Shaans, who came out and offered us toddy; and here, for the first time, we saw some of that singular mountain-tribe the Kieaans. The distances on the road this day, were marked off at every "dine" by small upright posts surrounded by a railing: the distance between several amounted to two miles five furlongs; but this varies considerably, as the coss, or dine, in the mountain districts, was often under two miles, whilst in the plains it generally exceeded three. It seems probable that the Burman distances are calculated rather by the time it takes to traverse them than by any fixed rule.

We halted at Kwensah, near the Mine river, a stream of considerable magnitude; and here we for the last time saw the plains of Ava: before us lay wild jungle and forests, and in the distance the blue summits of the Arracan mountains were indistinctly visible.

About two miles beyond Kwensah, after crossing the Mine river several times, we reached the lowest range of hills connected with the Yomadoung mountains, and commenced ascending. In a little valley at their foot, a post was stuck in the ground, to denote to the pilgrims and merchants who formerly

frequented this road, that a chokey, or watch-house, existed there, whence they would derive protection against the depredations of the robbers who infested the mountains. We had now regained the high road to Aeng, and several places were distinguishable where it had been cut and levelled, with no little trouble: it was in capital repair; and at certain distances were houses for the reception of pilgrims going to worship at the Shoechatoh pagoda. Many of these houses had been burned by accidentally catching fire from the long grass which had lately been in flames. The trees were scorched and deprived of their foliage, and the whole appearance of these hills was as dry and arid as can well be conceived. The jungle was not thick, and consisted principally of the male bamboo and a few other stunted trees: several small ponds, one or two containing muddy water, and the rest dry, were on the roadside, and near one of them the Burmahs had formerly erected a breastwork, the traces of which were almost obliterated.

Emerging from the jungle on the summit of a steep ghaut, we, at a mile distance, perceived the Shoechatoh. Built on the peak of a very high and rugged hill, the pagoda and its kioums seemed a delightful spot when compared with the bold but arid scenery around. At the foot of the hills the Mine river wound about in the most circuitous manner, and enriched a little verdant space of ground, where a village formerly stood—the only spot where

anything like vegetation could be seen, and where we consequently pitched our camp.

The Shoechatoh is held in the greatest veneration by the Buddhists, as containing the impression of Gaudma's feet—one on the summit, the other at the base of the hill. These are railed in, and covered over by splendidly gilt and carved temples, attended by numerous poonghis, who inhabit the kioums at the side and foot of the hill. Pilgrims from every part of the empire flock here to offer up their prayers; and, as our party entered the valley, the repeated tolling of the bells indicated that some suppliant was on the point of proffering his request to the deity.

The Burman government derives some profit from the Shoechatoh, by exacting a tax from the richer class of devotees, of from twenty to fifty rupees, according to their rank, and they are then allowed to pray within the railing which surrounds the foot. No tax is levied on those suppliants who content themselves with prayers outside the railing; but none are admitted within the sacred precincts without paying the fine. The ascent to the temple is by means of nine hundred and seventy stone steps, covered from the weather by a wooden roof, supported by numerous pillars.

During our march on the 21st, we followed the course of the Mine river for several miles, ascending almost imperceptibly the whole time; and, after crossing a low range of hills, near which was the

The Kieaans inhabit solely the mountain districts; and availing themselves of every little fertile patch of ground, cultivate rice and grain, and, like the Carians of Pegue, are principally devoted to agriculture. The men employ themselves in tilling the ground, hunting, and catching fish, which they afterwards dry as a resource for their families; whilst the women perform all the household drudgery, such as pounding rice, fetching water, and making garments for themselves and husbands, from the cotton growing wild in the mountains.

The Kieaans, in the vicinity of Napeh Mew, are a quiet, inoffensive race, and being under the control of government, are obliged to send their quota of men in case of war, and contribute their mite to the coffers of the state; but the remainder of their nation is perfectly wild and independent. Herding together in parties of thirty and forty, in the most remote and unfrequented recesses of the mountain wilds, these savage inhabitants of the forests acknowledge no sovereign, but submit solely to the decrees of nature; and it was with some difficulty that I succeeded in procuring from one of the elders of their villages an account of their rude law and customs.

The origin of the Kieaans is lost in fiction; and of their early history the present race know little, except by vague tradition, which states them in former days to have been the possessors of the plains of Ava and Pegue, until a horde of Tartars, from the North, made an irruption into their territory, and

settled there, under the authority of the Kieaan king. In the course of time, the strangers became very powerful, and having elected a sovereign amongst themselves, threw off the yoke of the Kieaan king, declared their chief supreme, and asserted, at the same time, that "it was incompatible with nature to have two kings and two races of people in one land." Seizing then the Kieaan chieftains who disputed his authority, the new king put them to death, and prescribing their friends and followers, left them no alternative but flight or submission to his authority. In consequence of this tyrannical conduct, the Kieaan chieftains, prefering a free life in a strange land to slavery in their own country, collected all their followers and herds of cattle, in which their principal wealth consisted; and taking advantage of the first opportunity of escaping, regained their independence by taking refuge in the lofty remote mountains on the frontiers of China, Siam, and Arracan, where they considered themselves safe from the persecutions of their powerful neighbours. With them fled some members of their former royal family, but in the course of time deaths and frequent changes of residence destroyed all traces of them, and the Kieaans of this part of the country know not whether the descendants of their ancient princes still exist. Divested as they were of a common head, under whom they might rally, the inhabitants of each village selected from amongst themselves one who either from age or experience was deemed worthy to be their

chief; and in this independent state they have since continued, each little community considering itself perfectly distinct from those adjoining.

These small republics have since resisted all attempts at much intercourse with the adjoining nations, and have preserved, unsullied, their innate love of liberty and independence. Repeated efforts have been made by the Burmahs to reduce the mountaineers under their sway, but without any lasting success, though it would appear that, at a very distant period back, the Kieaans had been obliged to pay tribute. It is related, that shortly after the expulsion of the Kieaans from the plains, the despotic sovereigns of Ava demanded an annual tribute from the persecuted mountaineers, who, when unable to comply with the demand, were forced to deliver all the pretty women of their families into the hands of the tyrant's satellites, by whom they were carried to court, and then selected to adorn the seraglio of the king. To such an excess was this at last carried, that the Kieaans, in order to save their race from extermination, persuaded all the nubile women to sacrifice their beauty at the altar of freedom, an act which they cheerfully complied with; and tattooing their faces in the manner before described, rendered themselves so hideous, that the monarch was quite disgusted, and directed others to be sought for, when none but children could be found who had not undergone this operation. Foiled in his endeavours to transport the mountain beauties to his haram, the

Tartar dropped the practice, and the necessity for tattooing no longer existing, that custom is now optional, and seldom undergone by the women until they are twenty-five or thirty years of age.

Only one trace of supreme authority still exists among the Kieaans, and this in the person of the Passine, or head of their religion. This situation was formerly held by a man who resided on a mountain called the Poijou, near the source of the Moh river, and united in his person the two offices of soothsayer and priest, which are now held by his descendants in the male and female line.

Writing and books being unknown to the Kieaans, the mandates of the Passines are verbal, but irrevocable; to them every dispute of importance is referred for arbitration, and in cases of marriage or sickness they are consulted.

The tenets of the Kieaan faith are most simple, and of the supreme Deity they appear to have no conception; for to my question on the subject, my informer answered, that "they were the offspring of the mountains, and of nature;" and nature alone appears to have any claims on their feelings.

A thick bushy tree bearing a small berry, by the Burmahs called subri, is the principal object of their adoration. Under its shady branches they at certain seasons of the year assemble with their families and offer up sacrifices of pigs, oxen, and grain, on which they afterwards revel. Their cattle of every kind accompany them during these excursions, and parti-

cipate in the devotion offered to the tree; the principle of the Kieaan religion being to adore every thing that is of use, or conduces to the luxuries of life. They also put implicit faith in the supernatural qualities of the Aërolite, which is considered a certain charm against every evil. Whenever a thunderstorm occurs, the Kieaans search among the trees to find those which may have been scathed, or their branches broken by lightning. When one is discovered, they immediately commence digging underneath the broken branch in search of this stone, which they state to be about the size of a man's hand, and to have fallen from heaven; and if they are successful, a hog and a bullock is instantly sacrificed and devoured. The stone is then deposited with the Passine, who preserves the precious talisman with the greatest care.

The Kieaans have no idea how the world was formed, and their distinction between good and evil consists in supposing that those who honour and respect their parents, take care of their children and cattle, eat most meat, and drink spirits to the greatest excess, will be sure of being well provided for hereafter, by their souls entering the bodies of cows, oxen, or pigs; whereas those people whose sensual appetites are not so great, and do not enjoy to the utmost those benefits which are thrown in their way, will be disregarded and contemned.

It is very singular that though believing in the doctrine of transmigration, the Kieaans should slay

their cattle; but it appears that they cannot do so without previously obtaining the sanction of the Passine.

When a Kieaan dies, the event is hailed with all the appearance of joy, and a large feast is given by his family, to which the villagers are invited, who demonstrate their affection for the deceased by eating, drinking, and dancing most immoderately. Should the defunct be a man of property, his body is burned, and the ashes being collected, are placed in a basket, and either taken to Yehaantoung or Keoungnatyne mountains, and buried there. The former mountain is held particularly sacred, and is so lofty that, to use the words of the simple Kieaan, who was giving me this information, from its summit the whole world can be seen. Over the tombs of the chieftains a shed is erected, and people are left to watch for some time, and keep it in repair: a log of wood, roughly shaped, and representing the figure of a man, is likewise placed there for the purpose of frightening away evil spirits. The poorer class of Kieaans, if not in the immediate vicinity of Yehaantoung or Keoungnatyne, are buried any where.

There exists no religious ceremony on the marriage of the Kieaans. The contracting parties proceed in the first instance to the Passine, and ask his opinion of the match; if favorable, the bridegroom sends the parents of the damsel, a pig, an ox, a spear, a tomtom, a dāh*, and some liquor distilled

* Sword, or knife.

from rice: a grand feast winds up the ceremony, and the marriage is considered duly concluded.

Should the lady after marriage prove false to the nuptial vows, and her paramour be discovered, he is obliged to present a hog, an ox, and a spear, to the injured husband, and a fine string of pearls to adorn the neck of the lady, who, after this peace-offering, is considered quite immaculate, and again admitted to the matrimonial couch, without her reputation being in the least degree tainted.

A hog, a bullock, and a dinner appear to be a sufficient palliative for any crime; for even should a girl be forcibly carried off, the perpetrator is exonerated on paying one bullock, and, in the event of her having a child, she has the option of taking the man as her husband: but if he refuses, a bullock is demanded from him, he takes charge of the infant, and the lady is restored to her fair fame. If a similar case occurs to the daughter of a chief, no less than three bullocks are the forfeit for the offence, and the same number if the man refuses reparation by marriage. A divorce is purchased at the expense of one bullock.

In cases of murder the delinquent is immediately arrested by the chief of the village, who obliges him to give up three of his friends or relations as slaves to the family of the deceased, or ransom them at the rate of thirty rupees each man. Thus human life by these savages is valued at the moderate sum of nine pounds. If the murderer is unable to pay the

fine, or find sureties, he is himself kept as a slave; and if he absconds and takes refuge in another village, the inhabitants of it, if endued with a proper sense of propriety, immediately send him back. Should they afford him protection, the injured villagers assemble their force, and attack that village which has received the murderer, who, when retaken, is then committed to slavery, it being expressly forbidden by the Passine to shed human blood.

Thieving is not considered a very heinous crime; but should corn be purloined, the offender is obliged to purchase his own freedom, either by giving a man as a slave, or paying thirty rupees.

The Kieaans have no knowledge of medicine, and hold drugs in the greatest contempt. When a man or woman is taken ill, they are carried to the Passine, who recites incantations over them, and uses the Aërolite as a specific; previous to which a feast is prepared for the Passine and his friends.

Although a pecuniary fine is often imposed by their rude legislature, it appears that silver is not procured in these mountains. Iron ore is found in considerable quantity, which they carry to the Burmahs, or Mugs, and exchange for the more precious metal.

Wild honey, dried fish caught in the mountain-torrents, and their coarsely-manufactured cloth, form their principal articles of trade; for which they re-

ceive in return, salt, silver, and such food or clothing as their own fastnesses may have denied them.

With the use of fire-arms the Kieaans are unacquainted, and seem to hold them in great awe; their own weapons are the spear, the dāh, and the cross-bow, with a quiver full of arrows. The latter are made of bamboo, with the point hardened in the fire, and doubly barbed: they are deeply poisoned, and the slightest touch inflicts instant death. This poison is vegetable, and procured by making an incision in the bark of certain trees, and collecting the liquor which exudes.

Previous to our leaving the mountains, I was so fortunate as to have an opportunity of sketching the costume of the male and female Kieaans, who, delighted with some cloth I bestowed on them, and a few rupees, offered no objection to standing in my tent whilst I took their likeness. The blue-faced lady, on my examining the manner in which her face was tattooed, hung down her head, would, no doubt, have blushed, had her swarthy visage permitted it, and said, very coyly, that she was "so much ashamed."

We left the little Kieaan village on the 22nd, and, following the bed of the Mine river, entered a deep pass formed by the mountains through which this stream runs: rising almost perpendicularly to a great height, they completely hemmed in the line of march; and their summits and sides clothed with trees, now

of a verdant appearance, shielded it from the rays of the sun, and rendered the road pleasant and interesting. On our march we met several Kieaans laden with fish, which they catch and preserve here, and then carry to their families. It appeared to be very fine trout, and was cured in the most simple manner. On the banks of the river several small platforms were erected, about a foot and a half or two feet from the ground. They were made of bamboos left rather apart for the free passage of heat and smoke; thus forming a simple kind of gridiron. A fire is placed under this, which is procured by rubbing two pieces of bamboo together with great rapidity; and then the fish, being previously spitted on a slip of bamboo, are laid on the frame, when, becoming dried and cooked, they prove very delicious. With the exception of these straggling individuals, not a soul was seen, nor the recent traces of any one, during ten miles' march through this dell. We encamped on the first spot we could find which afforded sufficient width to pitch a tent, and were so fortunate as to procure plenty of forage, although I had been told we were to expect nothing for the cattle but bamboo-leaves. So far from that being the case, the vegetation, as we advanced, became more and more luxuriant; the most delightful variety of brilliant foliage hung over the stream; rills of water abounded in the mountains, and large masses of rock, torn from their original site by the mountain-torrents, lay here and there in the bed of the river, and occasionally dam-

ming the stream, caused it to rush down in water-falls, giving to the whole scene one of the wildest and most romantic appearances imaginable.

The road this day, though far from good, being over the rocks and loose stones in the course of the stream, might, in a short time, with but little trouble, be made passable for wheel-carriages; but during the rains, the force and depth of the current would prevent a passage being effected.

The next morning, after winding through the bed of the Mine river for four miles, the detachment arrived at the post of Kaang, where two or three good houses remained which had been occupied by a Burman picket. At this point the river divides into two branches, and the road, leaving the deep romantic dell, begins ascending the mountain. The ascent for a mile is extremely abrupt, as it runs up a tongue of land proceeding from the main range, and which is so very steep on the sides that the road has necessarily been made straight up the hill. After ascending a couple of miles, the road ran on the summit of the ridge which was not more than fifteen or twenty feet wide, and the declivity on each side exceedingly abrupt. Across this part of the road a stockade had been erected, which completely enfiladed it for a considerable distance. This work was called Keoukree, and derived its water from a stream at the bottom of the valley: it may have contained about one hundred men.

During four miles more we continued ascending,

and then reached the foot of the highest point of the mountains, where the road, which previously had been as good as could be wished, became very abrupt and much broken, the rain having forced away great part of it. The men marched all day, and, were it not for the refreshing shade thrown by the lofty trees under which we passed, would have suffered much from the heat and want of water; but, indeed, we were not a little fatigued when we gained the summit of the mountain, and halted at a stockade called Nairiegain. Our toil, however, was amply repaid by the grand scene which opened to the view. Below us, in every direction, rose immense mountains beautifully wooded from the summit down to the very base, and giving rise to the Mine river on the east, and Aeng river on the west; both of whose numerous sources could be distinctly traced in the ravines falling from the mountains. This was exactly the frontier-line. On one side lay the British territory, and on the other the dominions of the king of Ava; and had it not been that the weather was hazy, the view, it was said, would have comprised the sea, and the plains of the Irrawaddy.

The little stockade in which we halted for the night, was built on the line of demarcation; and, in the event of future circumstances rendering it advisable to establish military posts on our frontier, would prove a capital position. It is the complete key to the Aeng road, and, commanding the ascent both from the Aeng and Ava side, would prevent

the Burmahs availing themselves of the passes in Arracan, by which they could annoy and impede the advance of our troops.

Nature, indeed, could not have formed a more formidable or easier-to-be-defended barrier than the Arracan mountains. Every foot presents a pass or hill which might be defended by a handful of men against hundreds; and the jungle would always afford a secure place of refuge to the vanquished. The water at Nairiegain was so difficult of access that the cattle could not approach it; but it was of good quality, and in quantity sufficient for our consumption. It is quite a mistaken idea that no water exists in these mountains, there being numerous springs in the hills; but these rising about half way from the summit, where the road runs, the difficulty of access to them is very great. This might be obviated by cutting paths to and from them; and digging reservoirs, of sufficient size to water the cattle, would always ensure a supply, as the spring, in a short time, would replenish them.

At night we were enveloped in a cloud, and the air became much colder, but, having no thermometer, I could not ascertain the difference of temperature; and the want of proper instruments, in like manner, prevented my ascertaining the height of the mountains.

The great range is called the Yomadoung, or Romah Pokoungtoung, and runs in a direction about S. 20° W., falling to the east in a succession of

parallel ranges, and on the west more abruptly to the sea.

In early times, the Kieaans used to prowl about this road in search of plunder, and attack and murder any traveller they might chance to meet with; but as their numbers were never very great, the merchants who formerly passed this way united their forces, and forming little caravans of from thirty to three hundred men, placed themselves beyond the power of these savage marauders.

A great trade was carried on before the war with Arracan and Ava, in which it is said forty thousand people were annually employed: the former country exported Indian and European manufactures, such as velvets, broadcloths, piece goods, silks, and muslins; and betel-nuts, salt, and other articles, the produce of its own soil; receiving in return, ivory, silver, copper, palmyra sugar, tobacco, oil, and lackered boxes. It was principally to further this intercourse that the late King of Ava, Minderaghee Prah, caused this superb road to be made—a work which reflects the greatest credit, not only on him who planned it, but also on those who carried it into execution. The labour bestowed upon it has been immense, as, for nearly twenty miles, the road is cut out of the hill side, to the width of between ten and twelve feet, and that with the most judicious attention to the falls of the ground. The remains of a parapet, formed of trunks of trees, are visible in many places; and it would be very advantageous if

something of the kind still existed, the precipices off the road being most terrific, and of such a depth, that if an animal lost its footing and fell over, his death would be almost inevitable. An accident of this kind occurred to the poney of one of the officers. In leaping a tree which had been felled across the road, the poor beast trod on some loose earth and rubbish, which immediately gave way with him, and, to our infinite horror, he was precipitated down the height, crushing, by his fall, the slight bushes that grew on the side of the hill; fortunately, at about a hundred and fifty feet descent from the road, he was stopped by a bushy tree, and in a short time afterwards resumed his footing, when he proved most miraculously to be unhurt. It was impossible to bring the animal back to the road whence he started; but we succeeded in leading him up about half a mile further on, by gradually edging along the hill.

The Aeng road was first commenced in 1816, under the superintendence of the Sandowey Woon and other chieftains, through whose territories it passed, the whole plan in the first instance having been laid out by the engineers of the King. During the first two years only five hundred workmen were employed; but when the road had been completed nearly up to the summit of the mountain, two hundred more were added, each man receiving seven rupees per month wages, who finished it as far as Shoechatoh. But what contributed more than any-

thing to the completion of the road was a most sensible rule enforced by the Burman government, by which, in lieu of taxes on their merchandize, it obliged all the travellers to carry with them working tools, and repair those parts of the road which might require it, or facilitate the access to the water. In this manner, constant use, instead of spoiling the road, only improved it; and it was solely owing to the stagnation of commerce during the last two years, and the consequent encroachment and ravages of the monsoon, that any part of the route was bad; for as the communication is closed between May and January, the havoc committed during that period must be annually repaired.

The detachment was unable to leave Nairiegain till ten o'clock on the 24th, the road down the mountain having been completely blocked up by large trees felled across at every few yards. The descent for six furlongs was exceedingly rapid, and led to a small open spot used as a halting-place by travellers, and named Kouroukrie, where a fine stream of water issued from the hill, and, being dammed up, afforded great refreshment to our jaded cattle. A little further on was another small stockade, in a capital position, and defended by an abatis extending for some distance down the road, which, for two miles more was much impeded by trees; which so much retarded our march, that we did not arrive at Yoadah, though a distance of only six miles, till sunset. The latter part of the road was through a bamboo jungle, where

we heard the screams of innumerable baboons, and saw the recent tracks of many wild elephants.

On the 25th, we still continued descending the same tongue of land, and, after marching eleven miles, arrived at Sarowah, on the banks of the Aeng river. Thence to Aeng, where we arrived on the 26th, was fifteen miles, the road occasionally crossing the Aeng river and several smaller streams: over the latter substantial wooden bridges had been thrown, of sufficient width to admit any species of wheel-carriage, but time had so much impaired the wood that they had all fallen into decay; whilst those which age had spared had been purposely destroyed by the Burmahs. Six miles before entering Aeng the road leaves the hills, and from thence is superb, being quite level and about twenty feet wide.

Aeng now contains but few inhabitants; but formerly it was of considerable size, and the emporium of all the trade between the two kingdoms: the tide runs past the village, but there is not water sufficient for large boats within six miles. Instead of finding provisions and boats prepared for us as we had been led to expect, we discovered that no preparations had been made for our reception, and that the first British detachment which had reached Aeng was a party of thirty Sepoys, who had only arrived there ten days before. Fortunately, a little canoe, just large enough to contain half a dozen Kieaan boatmen and myself, happened to be at the village, and into this

I went for the purpose of proceeding to Ramree. During forty-eight hours we paddled on through the different creeks which intersect the country without seeing a living being, and at last reached Ramree, when I found it was necessary to proceed forty miles further, to Amherst Harbour, where Commodore Hayes and Colonel Garnham were stationed. From these officers we derived every assistance; they immediately took the necessary steps to forward boats and provisions for the detachment; and it happening fortunately that some had been prepared for a reconnoitring party, which was to have proceeded to Aeng next day, I was enabled to return to the eighteenth regiment without delay, and some days afterwards saw it embark for Madras.

Thus, in the most satisfactory manner ended our interesting journey. We met with but little arduous difficulty, yet performed a march of one hundred and twenty-four miles from Pakangyeh, which had been supposed impracticable, in eleven days; and clearly pointed out that, had this road been examined, it would have been found that there was nothing to have prevented a portion of General Morrison's army from wintering in Ava, instead of perishing in the marshes of Arracan.

The advantages of this fine road, leading, in twenty-five marches, from Aeng to Ava, more than counterbalance the fatigue and trouble likely to attend the passage of artillery over the mountains, where, in many places, from the great ascent, bullocks could be

of no use in dragging the guns, which must, therefore, necessarily be pulled up by sheer strength of arm; and for the same reason, it would be impossible to convey the stores in carts. That part of the road which requires most actual making, is for eight miles in the bed of the Mine river, where the annual torrents are constantly changing the position of the rocks and stones; but this could be remedied, in many places, by felling large trees, and with them forming an artificial road, the rocks answering as abutments. Some parts of this road among the mountains require widening; and it would be requisite to sink tanks at the springs, and cut paths to and from them: but, taking every thing into consideration, there is little doubt but that a battalion of pioneers, sent one week in advance, would render the Aeng road quite passable for an army.

Here closed the active operations of the British army; and before many weeks elapsed the whole of it had embarked for Calcutta and Madras, with the exception of a few regiments left in garrison at Rangoon, which town we retained as a pledge for the second payment of twenty-five lacks of rupees*; but by the latest accounts from the East, it appears that this sum having been delivered to the British authorities in September last, Major-general Sir A. Campbell, and the force under his command, proceeded to occupy the new town of Amherst, near Martaban. This settlement has been formed at the mouth of the

* 250,000*l.*

Thalueyn river, on a salubrious spot of ground, and is intended to be the capital of the ceded provinces, which it, at the same time, protects from the inroads of the Burmahs on the opposite shore. Two of his Majesty's regiments, and a proportionate force of Sepoys are to be stationed there; and it promises soon to become a populous town, as the inhabitants, who were under our protection in Pegue, are daily flocking to it in crowds. Hitherto, the Burman government has performed all the stipulations of the treaty with fidelity, and has even adhered to that clause which provides for the safety of those Burmese who sided with us during the war: it is, therefore, to be hoped that the severe lesson lately inculcated on the court of Ava will not be soon forgotten, but may tend to render its councils less sanguinary than formerly, and more open to the dictates of moderation and humanity.

APPENDIX.

TREATY of PEACE between the Honourable East India Company on the one part, and his Majesty the King of Ava on the other, settled by Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, K.C.B. and K.C.T.S., commanding the expedition, and senior commissioner in Pegue and Ava; Thomas Campbell Robertson, Esq., civil commissioner in Pegue and Ava, and Henry Ducie Chads, Esq., captain commanding his Britannic Majesty's and the Honourable Company's naval force on the Irrawaddy river, on the part of the Honourable Company, and by Mengyee-Maha-men-hlah-kyan-ten Woonghee, lord of Lay-Kaing, and Mengyee Maha-men-hlah-thu-hah-thoo-Atwen-woon, lord of the revenue, on the part of the King of Ava; who have each communicated to the other their full powers agreed to, and executed at Yandaboo, in the kingdom of Ava, on this twenty-fourth day of February, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, corresponding with the fourth day of the decrease of the moon Taboung, in the year one thousand one hundred and eighty-seven Gaudma Æra.

Art. I. There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable Company on the one part, and his Majesty the King of Ava on the other.

Art. II. His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims, and will abstain from all future interference with

the principality of Assam, and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jynteea. With regard to Munnipoor, it is stipulated, that should Ghumbeer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as rajah thereof.

Art. III. To prevent all future disputes respecting the boundary line between the two great nations, the British government will retain the conquered provinces of Arracan, including the four divisions of Arracan, Ramree, Cheduba and Sandoway, and his Majesty the King of Ava cedes all right thereto. The Aunoupectoumiou, or Arracan Mountains, (known in Arracan by the name of Yeomadoung or Pokhingloung range,) will henceforth form the boundary between the two great nations on that side. Any doubts regarding the said line of demarcation will be settled by the commissioners appointed by the respective governments for that purpose, such commissioners from both powers to be suitable and corresponding in rank.

Art. IV. His Majesty the King of Ava cedes to the British government the conquered provinces of Yeh, Tavoy, and Mergui, and Tenasserim, with the islands and dependencies thereunto appertaining, taking the Thalueyn river as the line of demarcation on that frontier; any doubts regarding their boundaries will be settled as specified in the concluding part of Art. III.

Art. V. In proof of the sincere disposition of the Burman government to maintain the relations of peace and amity between the nations, and as part indemnification to the British government for the expenses of the war, his Majesty the King of Ava agrees to pay the sum of one crore of rupees.

Art. VI. No person whatever, whether native or foreigner, is hereafter to be molested by either party, on account of the part which he may have taken, or have been compelled to take, in the present war.

Art. VII. In order to cultivate and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two governments, it is agreed, that accredited ministers retaining an escort, or safeguard of fifty men from each, shall reside at the durbar of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase, or to build a suitable place of residence, of permanent materials, and a commercial treaty upon principles of reciprocal advantage will be entered into, by the two high-contracting powers.

Art. VIII. All public and private debts contracted by either government, or by the subjects of either government, with the others previous to the war, to be recognised and liquidated, upon the same principles of honour and good faith, as if hostilities had not taken place between the two nations; and no advantage shall be taken by either party of the period that may have elapsed since the debts were incurred, or in consequence of the war; and, according to the universal law of nations, it is further stipulated, that the property of all British subjects who may die in the dominions of his Majesty the King of Ava shall, in the absence of legal heirs, be placed in the hands of the British Resident, or Consul in the said dominions, who will dispose of the same according to the tenour of the British law. In like manner, the property of Burmese subjects, dying, under the same circumstances, in any part of the British dominions, shall be made over to the minister, or other authority delegated by his Burmese Majesty to the supreme government of India.

Art. IX. The King of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels in Burman ports, that are not required for Burman ships or vessels in British ports; nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon river, or other Burman ports, be required to land their guns, or unship their rudders, or to do any other act not required of Burmese ships or vessels in British ports.

Art. X. The good and faithful ally of the British government, his Majesty the King of Siam, having taken a part in the present war, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards his Majesty and his subjects, be included in the above treaty.

Art. XI. This treaty to be ratified by the Burmese authorities competent in the like cases, and the ratification to be accompanied by all British, whether European or native, American and other prisoners, who will be delivered over to the British commissioners; the British commissioners, on their part, engaging that the said treaty shall be ratified by the right honourable the Governor-General in council; and the ratification shall be delivered to his Majesty the King of Ava in four months, or sooner, if possible, and all the Burmese prisoners shall, in like manner, be delivered over to their own government as soon as they arrive from Bengal.

(Signed)
LARGEEN MIONGA WOONGEE, L. S.

Seal of the Lotoo.

(Signed)
SHWAGUIN WOON ATAWOON, L. S.

(Signed)
A. CAMPBELL, Major-General and Senior Commissioner.

(Signed)
T. C. ROBERTSON, Civil Commissioner. L. S.

(Signed)
H. D. CHADS, Capt. R. N.

Additional Article.—The British Commissioners being most anxiously desirous to manifest the sincerity of their wish for peace, and to make the immediate execution of the fifth article of this treaty as little irksome or inconvenient as possible to his Majesty the King of Ava, consent to the following arrangements with respect to the division of the sum total, as specified in the article before referred to, into instalments, viz., upon the payment of twenty-five lacs of rupees, or one-fourth of the sum total, (the other articles of the treaty being executed,) the army will retire to Rangoon. Upon the further payment of a similar sum, at that place, within one hundred days from this date, with the proviso as above, the army will evacuate the dominions of his Majesty the King of Ava with the least possible delay, leaving the remaining moiety of the sum total to be paid by equal annual instalments in two years, from this 24th day of February, 1826, A.D., through the Consul or Resident in Ava or Pegu, on the part of the Honourable East India Company.

(Signed)
LARGEEN MIONGA WOONGEE, L. S.
Seal of the Lotoo.

(Signed)
SHWAGUIN WOON ATAWOÓN, L. S.

(Signed)
A. CAMPBELL, Major-General and Senior Commissioner.

(Signed)
T. C. ROBERTSON, Civil Commissioner. L. S.

H. D. CHADS, Capt. R. N.

THE END.

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- 1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books to NRLF
- Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

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